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U.S. Wildlife Service

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Report FY 1997

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Law enforcement activities support the national interest and objectives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the sound management of the Nation's fish and wildlife resources. International conservation goals are also achieved by carrying out the provisions of treaties and U.S. laws designed to help foreign countries protect species that occur within their borders.

Base Program

The Service protects fish, wildlife, and plants through a range of law enforcement techniques. These include:

- Surveillance of areas where priority wildlife and fishery resources are concentrated. To protect the dwindling numbers of ducks and geese, the Service routinely operates special enforcement task forces during waterfowl season in many states, including California, Alaska, Minnesota, Louisiana, and Texas.
- Inspection of shipments entering or leaving the United States at designated ports, border ports, and special ports.
- Investigation of known and suspected violations.
- Distribution of information about Federal wildlife regulations and their enforcement.
- Submission of evidence of violations to Regional Solicitors of the Interior Department or U.S. Attorneys for consideration of civil penalties or criminal prosecution.

Objectives

- To enforce the Lacey Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act, Eagle Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, Airborne Hunting Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, Antarctic Conservation Act, Archaeological Resources Protection Act, Wild Bird Conservation Act, and the African Elephant Conservation Act.
- To uncover major commercial activity involving illegal trade of protected wildlife and wildlife products.
- To protect domestic and foreign wildlife species that enter into interstate and international commerce that are protected by treaty or otherwise under Federal jurisdiction, and to issue permits when appropriate.
- To enhance legitimate use and enjoyment of migratory birds and other wildlife.
- To inform citizens of various Federal laws and regulations relating to the protection of fish, wildlife, and plants.

Major Components

The FY 1997 enacted budget for the Division of Law Enforcement was $36,743,000. This amount was augmented with $3,000,000 in user fee collections to help offset the cost of the wildlife inspection program. At the end of the fiscal year, 228 special agents and 81 wildlife inspectors were employed by the Division of Law Enforcement. A table displaying the distribution of the agent force by state appears on page 12.

Agents now help conserve bald and golden eagles, migratory birds, endangered species, marine mammals, species protected by international treaty or by individual foreign governments, and any wildlife hunted or harassed from aircraft.

The law enforcement program has six major components that provide the Service with the capability of maintaining Federal leadership in the conservation of wildlife. A description of each component follows.

Field Investigations

In 1997, the Service employed 210 special agents to enforce Federal wildlife protection laws by conducting investigations and apprehending individuals charged with violations throughout the United States, including Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Responsibilities under the Lacey Act of 1900 originally consisted of prohibiting the interstate commerce of illegally taken game and preventing the importation of injurious wildlife into the United States. The complexity of investigations has changed through the years from primarily petty offense violations to felony violations involving illegal trafficking in wildlife, both within the United States and in foreign countries. Agents now help conserve bald and golden eagles, migratory birds, endangered species, marine mammals, species protected by international treaty or by individual foreign governments, and any wildlife hunted or harassed from aircraft. Descriptions of specific cases handled by each region begin on page 17.

The Service's anti-drug activities are principally directed at the detection and eradication of drug supplies on Service lands. The Service also supports and assists in the Department of the Interior's drug eradication initiatives. In 1997, Service officers eradicated almost 200,000 wild marijuana plants, destroyed 1,500 cultivated plants, and seized drugs and drug paraphernalia with an estimated value in excess of $50 million.

Special Operations

The Branch of Special Operations is an operational unit whose agents conduct covert and complex overt investigations that are national and international in scope. The Branch employs special agents stationed at strategic locations throughout the United States, who utilize innovative investigative techniques to uncover and document the illegal commercialization and large-scale illegal taking of wildlife. The Branch also provides intelligence gathering, analysis, and strategy development capabilities to support these investigations and the work of special agents and wildlife inspectors in the regions.

In recent years, the Branch's work has become even more critical to the Service's law enforcement mission. Officers worldwide have found it increasingly difficult to detect wildlife crime using conventional methods of enforcement. Today, sophisticated organized groups operating clandestinely are responsible for many commercial and large-scale violations of wildlife conservation laws and treaties. The crimes that pose the most serious threat to wildlife are often the most difficult to solve because the criminals involved are well organized, have substantial financial resources, and use complex strategies to avoid detection.

Although the investigative techniques needed to track down and document such crimes are themselves time-consuming, costly, and potentially dangerous, they are effective. The Branch of Special Operations is successfully combating the global exploitation of wildlife resources and providing, through its record of successful investigations and prosecutions, a powerful deterrent to those who seek to profit at the expense of wildlife. Additional information highlighting the Branch's undercover investigations begins on page 39.

Service wildlife inspectors are import-export control officers who monitor the U.S. wildlife trade. USFWS

Special Agent Trainees
The Service hires new special agents using nationwide recruitment of the best qualified candidates without regard to geographic location. All new agents are sent to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia, for 18 weeks of basic training before being assigned to various field locations for closely supervised, on-the-job training. After 12 to 18 months, they are absorbed into the field investigations program.

Wildlife Inspectors
In FY 1997, the Service employed 81 uniformed wildlife inspectors to monitor wildlife imports and exports and help halt illegal trade. These inspectors work with counterparts from the U.S. Customs Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture, providing expertise in wildlife law and species identification. Wildlife inspectors scrutinize the legality of permits and conduct physical inspections, targeting repeat offenders and checking shipments on a random basis. They give priority to processing importations of live wildlife. Detailed information about the Service's wildlife inspection program begins on page 41.

Washington Office Support
The Washington Office of the Division of Law Enforcement provides overall direction, policy development, and direct support to the regional offices. In addition to monitoring nationally significant investigations and coordinating those that involve more than one region, the Washington Office conducts foreign and sensitive investigations. It maintains liaison with other Federal law enforcement agencies and drafts and reviews Federal regulations.

The Washington Office maintains a training staff at headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, and at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Glynco, Georgia, to provide basic training for new agents and wildlife inspectors, as well as annual in-service training for both groups. Training is conducted at the Service's National Conservation Training Center, located in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, as well as at FLETC. In addition to basic training, staff members also develop specialized curricula and conduct courses for refuge officers, law enforcement managers, and state and foreign conservation officers. The Division's training program is described in detail on page 52.

Applying computer technology in the fight against wildlife crime, the Washington Office administers the Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS), an automated investigative records hardware and software package designed to assist field agents and supervisors in managing their caseloads. LEMIS also provides automated control of wildlife permits and trade statistics.

Forensics Laboratory
The Clark R. Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory opened in September 1988 in Ashland, Oregon. This unique facility provides species-specific identification of wildlife parts and products to assist the Service and individual state and foreign governments in establishing evidence of criminal activities. See page 50 for additional information about this facility.

Major Wildlife Law Violations

The Service considers the illegal commercialization of wildlife a most serious violation because of the impact it has on species population levels. The Service directs its enforcement resources toward federally protected wildlife, including endangered and threatened species, migratory waterfowl, migratory non-game birds, and marine mammals, such as walrus and polar bears. The Service works with state agencies to protect resident species from poachers who engage in interstate commerce with illegally taken fish, wildlife, or plants.

The Service is committed to efforts on behalf of federally protected species, as well as to its continuing partnerships with states, tribes, trust territories, and foreign countries in the interest of conservation.

Wildlife shipments entering and leaving the United States during FY 1997 numbered more than 85,000. Halting illegal shipments is another enforcement priority.

Inspectors are trained to detect a range of methods of evading wildlife protection laws. Along with outright smuggling, methods include falsifying documents and failing to declare what is being imported. High-value targets include reptile leathers, spotted cat hides, and live parrots.

Utilizing both covert and overt investigations, the Service is continuing its commitment to protect migratory birds. Investigations also target airborne hunting practices that threaten a wide range of wildlife.

In addition, the Service is expanding its focus on environmental contaminant problems that affect waterfowl and other migratory birds. The growing problems associated with contaminants and the destruction of critical habitat for endangered species require rapid enforcement action in order to limit or preclude irreparable harm to the environment.

Public Awareness

The Service publicizes the results of major investigations in the belief that publicity will help deter wildlife crime. Although it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of such efforts, they are standard features of law enforcement programs at Federal, state, and local levels. Other public awareness initiatives include creating airport displays; donating forfeited property for educational purposes to Federal agencies, museums, and conservation organizations; developing brochures and fact sheets; and working with the media to secure press and television coverage of the Service's enforcement efforts.

The Service holds public and professional meetings, gives presentations, and sends out direct mailings to disseminate information about laws and regulations in an effort to prevent even inadvertent violations. These outreach efforts often target specific groups, including customs brokers, taxidermists, hunters, conservation group members, and travel agents.

Chronology of Historic Events

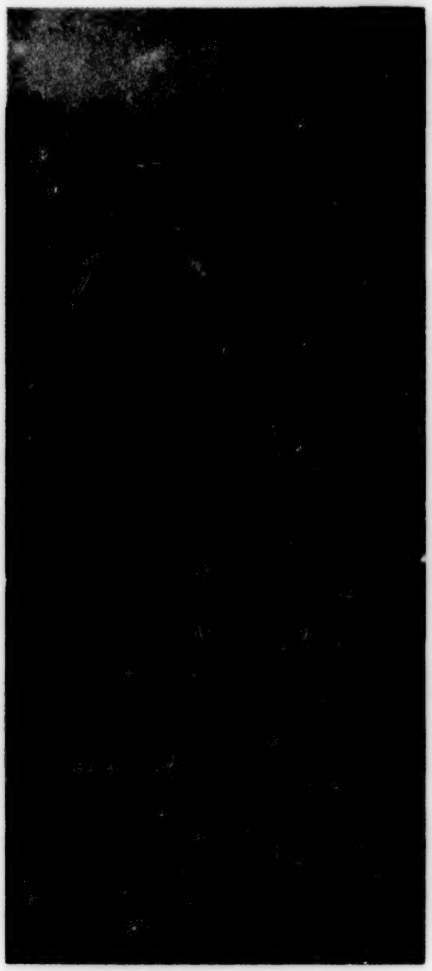
The goal of the Service in its enforcement efforts is to perpetuate fish and wildlife as national resources by deterring criminal activities. The Service is committed to efforts on behalf of federally protected species, as well as to its continuing partnerships with states, tribes, trust territories, and foreign countries in the interest of conservation.

On September 28, 1972, the Division of Law Enforcement was created as successor to the Division of Management and Enforcement. On April 26, 1973, the former title "U.S. Game Management Agent" was changed to "Special Agent." These organizational and job title changes reflected an overall change in both the Washington Office and field operations. Law enforcement became the primary duty and responsibility of the Division.

The following are significant developments in the history of Federal wildlife law enforcement:

1900. The Lacey Act took effect as the first Federal law protecting game; it prohibited the interstate shipment of illegally taken wildlife and the importation of injurious species. Enforcement of this Act became the responsibility of the Division of Biological Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

1905. The Division of Biological Survey became the Bureau of Biological Survey and remained in the Department of Agriculture.



Protecting waterfowl and other migratory birds has long been a priority for U.S. wildlife law enforcement. USFWS

1913. The Federal Migratory Bird Law (Weeks-McLean Law) became effective, and the first migratory bird hunting regulations were adopted on October 1.

1916. The United States signed the Migratory Bird Treaty with Great Britain (acting for Canada), recognizing migratory birds as an international resource.

1918. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act became law, making it unlawful to take, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird. The Act's prohibitions also applied to the feathers, parts, nests, and eggs of these birds.

1920. In the case of Missouri v. Holland, 252 U.S. 416, the United States Supreme Court sustained the Migratory Bird Treaty Act as constitutional "establishing beyond question the supremacy of the Federal treaty-making power as a source of authority for Federal wildlife regulation." Citing the state ownership doctrine, Missouri had filed suit to prevent a U.S. game warden from enforcing the Act within the state.

1926. The Black Bass Act became law, making it illegal to transport in interstate commerce black bass taken, purchased, or sold in violation of state law.

1934. The Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act became law, requiring all waterfowl hunters age 16 and over to possess a "Duck Stamp."

Also in that year, a Division of Game Management was created in the Bureau of Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture, with responsibility for wildlife law enforcement.

1935. The Lacey Act was expanded to prohibit foreign commerce in illegally taken wildlife.

1936. The United States signed the Migratory Bird Treaty with Mexico.

1939. The Bureau of Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Fisheries, Department of Commerce, were transferred to the U.S. Department of the Interior.

1940. The Bald Eagle Protection Act became law, prohibiting a variety of activities involving the species, including import, export, take, sale, purchase, or barter.

The Bureau of Biological Survey and the Bureau of Fisheries were combined to form the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior. All law enforcement responsibilities were continued in the Division of Game Management.

1951. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Albert Day announced an expanded program of enforcement and management for the protection of migratory waterfowl, transferring the personnel and funds of the Section of Waterfowl Management Investigations to the Branch of Game Management.

1956. The Fish and Wildlife Service was reorganized into the United States Fish and Wildlife Service consisting of a Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and a Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. Wildlife law enforcement responsibilities were placed in the Branch of Management and Enforcement of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

1960. Following an investigation that revealed large-scale market-hunting of waterfowl, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was amended to include felony provisions for commercial activities—a $2,000 fine or two years imprisonment, or both.

The Endangered Species Act prohibits the take and commercial exploitation of both native animals and plants and species of global concern. Ron Singer/USFWS

1962. The Bald Eagle Protection Act became the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and extended protection to golden eagles.

1970. The Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1969 became effective, prohibiting the importation into the United States of species "threatened with extinction worldwide," except as specifically allowed for zoological and scientific purposes, and propagation in captivity. The Act amended the Black Bass Act to prohibit interstate and foreign commerce in fish taken in violation of foreign law, a provision that had been added to the Lacey Act for wildlife in 1935. It also amended the Lacey Act so that its prohibition on interstate and foreign commerce applied not only to wild birds and mammals, but to reptiles, mollusks, amphibians, and crustaceans. This amendment was made in an effort aimed primarily at protecting the American alligator.

The Bureau of Commercial Fisheries was transferred to the Department of Commerce and became the National Marine Fisheries Service.

1971. The Airborne Hunting Act was signed into law, prohibiting the use of aircraft to hunt or harass wildlife.

1972. The United States signed the Migratory Bird Treaty with Japan. The Migratory Bird Treaty with Mexico was amended to protect additional species, including birds of prey.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 became law, establishing a moratorium on the taking and importing of marine mammals, such as polar bears, sea otters, dugongs, walrus, manatees, whales, porpoise, seals, and sea lions.

The Eagle Protection Act was amended to increase penalties from $500 or six months imprisonment to $5,000 or one year, and to add the provision that a second conviction was punishable by a $10,000 fine or two years imprisonment, or both. In addition, the amendment allowed for informants to be rewarded with half of the fine, not to exceed $2,500.

In September 1972, the Division of Management and Enforcement was reorganized. Waterfowl management responsibilities were transferred to the Office of Migratory Bird Management and the Division of Management and Enforcement became the Division of Law Enforcement.

1973. The Endangered Species Act of 1973 became law, recognizing that "endangered species of wildlife and plants are of aesthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people." The Act expanded the scope of prohibited activities to include not only importation, but also exportation, take, possession, and other activities involving illegally taken species, and interstate or foreign commercial activities. It implemented protection for a new "threatened" category—species likely to become in danger of extinction.

The field organization of the Division of Law Enforcement was restructured into 13 law enforcement districts, and selections for the first Special Agents in Charge and Assistant Special Agents in Charge under this organization were announced on February 21, 1974.

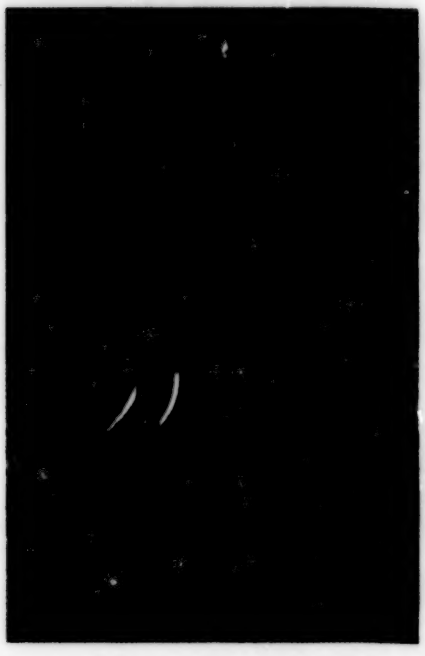
1974. The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife became the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

1975. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) went into effect, regulating the importation, exportation, and re-exportation of species listed on its three appendices.

The first biological technician was hired in New York City to inspect wildlife shipments.

1976. The United States signed the Migratory Bird Treaty with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The African Elephant Conservation Act became law, providing additional protection for the species, whose numbers had declined by 50 percent in the last decade.



The devasting effects of the illegal ivory trade prompted new protections for African elephants. Miriam Westervelt/USFWS

Regional offices of the Service hired wildlife inspectors at eight designated ports of entry to inspect wildlife. The eight ports were Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, Chicago, New Orleans, New York, Seattle, and Honolulu.

1979. The Supreme Court, in the case of Andrus v. Allard, upheld the prohibition on the sale of migratory bird feathers, regardless of whether they were obtained before Federal protection took effect.

The number of district offices was reduced to 12 when the Kansas City District Office was consolidated with the Denver, Colorado, District Office.

1981. The Black Bass and Lacey Acts were repealed and replaced by the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981. This comprehensive statute restored protection for migratory birds, which had been removed from the Act in 1969, and introduced protection for plants. The Lacey Act Amendments increased penalties and included a felony punishment scheme to target commercial violators and international traffickers. Penalties included fines of up to $20,000 or five years imprisonment, or both.

Dallas-Fort Worth became a designated port for wildlife entering or leaving the United States.

1982. The Endangered Species Act was amended to include a prohibition against taking plants on Federal lands and a new exception allowing the inadvertent, non-commercial transshipment through the United States of endangered fish or wildlife.

The field organization of the Division of Law Enforcement was reduced from 12 to seven districts, one for each region of the Service.

1983. The Service's Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS) became operational.

1986. The Supreme Court, in the case of Dwight Dion, upheld the applicability of the Eagle Protection Act to Native Americans on reservations. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act was amended to require that felony violations be "knowingly" committed.

1988. The African Elephant Conservation Act became law, providing additional protection for the species, whose numbers had declined by 50 percent in the last decade. The Lacey Act was amended to include, among other things, felony provisions for commercial guiding violations.

1989. The National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory was dedicated in Ashland, Oregon, providing expertise to assist in investigations, ranging from species identification to technical assistance such as surveillance and photography. The Laboratory was renamed the Clark R. Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in 1990 in memory of Clark R. Bavin, who served as chief of the Division of Law Enforcement from 1972 until his death in 1990.

1990. Portland, Oregon, became the tenth designated port of entry for the importation and exportation of wildlife.

1992. Baltimore, Maryland, became the eleventh designated port of entry for the importation and exportation of wildlife.

The Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992 was signed into law to address problems with the international trade in wild-caught birds, which contributes both to the decline of the species and to unacceptably high mortality rates.

1994. Boston, Massachusetts, was designated as the twelfth port of entry for importing and exporting fish and wildlife shipments.

1996. Designated port status was conferred on Atlanta, Georgia.

Enforcement Officer Titles

Titles of Federal wildlife law enforcement officers:

1900-13	Inspector, Interstate Commerce in Game
1913-18	Inspector, Migratory Bird Law
1918-28	U.S. Game Warden
1928-34	U.S. Game Protector
1934-73	U.S. Game Management Agent
1973-Present	Special Agent

Directors

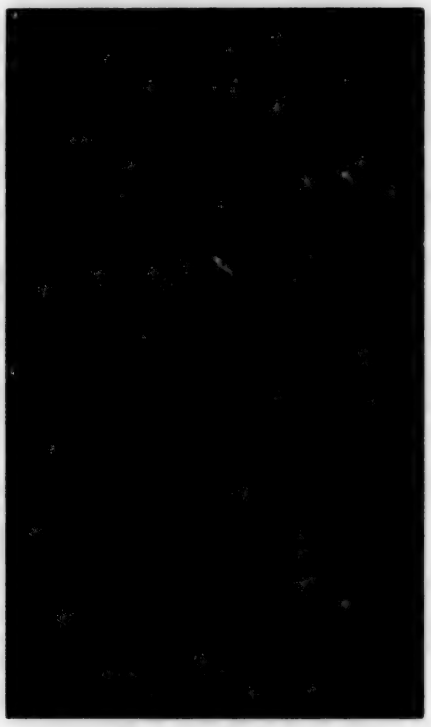
Since 1900, the following people have served as Chief of the Biological Survey or as Director of the Bureau or the Service for the periods indicated:

1900-10	C. Hart Merriam
1910-17	Henry W. Henshaw
1917-27	Edward W. Nelson
1927-34	Paul G. Redington
1934-35	Jay N. "Ding" Darling
1935-46	Ira N. Gabrielson
1946-53	Albert M. Day
1953-57	John L. Farley
1957-64	Daniel H. Janzen
1964-70	John S. Gottschalk
1970-73	Spencer H. Smith
1973-81	Lynn A. Greenwalt
1981-85	Robert A. Jantzen
1986-89	Frank H. Dunkle
1989-93	John F. Turner
1993-96	Mollie Beattie
1996-97	John G. Rogers, Acting
1997-Present	Jamie Rappaport Clark

Enforcement Chiefs

The following people have been in charge of the law enforcement responsibilities of the Service, or its predecessor agencies, for the periods indicated.

1900-16	Theodore Sherman Palmer
1916-26	George A. Lawyer
1926-34	H. P. Sheldon
1934-48	W. E. Crouch
1948-52	Jesse F. Thompson
1952-57	Joseph P. Linduska
1957-62	John D. Findlay
1962-67	Allan T. Studholme
1967-72	Charles H. Lawrence
1972-90	Clark R. Bavin
1991-96	John J. Doggett, III
1996-97	Thomas L. Striegler
1997-Present	Kevin R. Adams



Rigorous enforcement of legal protections helped support the recovery of bald eagle populations in this country. J&K Hollingsworth/ USFWS

Laws Enforced

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668C). This Act makes it illegal to import, export, or take bald or golden eagles, or to sell, purchase, or barter their parts or products made from them, including their nests or eggs.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712). Except as allowed by implementing regulations, this Act makes it unlawful to pursue, hunt, kill, capture, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird, including the feathers or other parts, nests, eggs, or migratory bird products.

Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act (16 U.S.C. 718). Commonly referred to as the "Duck Stamp Act," this law requires waterfowl hunters, 16 years of age or older, to purchase and possess a valid Federal waterfowl hunting stamp prior to taking migratory waterfowl.

Lacey Act (18 U.S.C. 42; 16 U.S.C. 3371-3378). This Act provides authority to the Secretary of the Interior to designate injurious wildlife and ensure the humane treatment of wildlife shipped to the United States. Further, it prohibits the importation, exportation, transportation, sale, or purchase of fish and wildlife taken or possessed in violation of state, Federal, Indian tribal, and foreign laws. The Amendments strengthened the enforcement of Federal wildlife laws and improved Federal assistance to the states and foreign governments in the enforcement of their wildlife laws. Also, the Act provides an important tool in the effort to gain control of smuggling and trade in illegally taken fish and wildlife.

Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407). This Act establishes a moratorium on the taking and importation of marine mammals, including parts and products, and defines Federal responsibility for conservation of marine mammals, with management authority vested in the Department of the Interior for the sea otter, walrus, polar bear, dugong, and manatee.

Airborne Hunting Act (16 U.S.C. 742j-l). Section 13 of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 is commonly referred to as the Airborne Hunting Act, or Shooting From Aircraft Act. It prohibits taking or harassing wildlife from aircraft, except when protecting wildlife, livestock, and human health or safety, as authorized by a Federal- or state-issued license or permit.

National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee). This Act constitutes an "Organic Act" for the National Wildlife Refuge System by providing guidelines and directives for administration and management of all areas in the system including "wildlife refuges, areas for the protection and conservation of fish and wildlife that are threatened with extinction, wildlife ranges, game ranges, wildlife management areas, or waterfowl production areas."

Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543). This Act prohibits the importation, exportation, taking, and commercialization in interstate or foreign commerce of fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered species. The Act also implements the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Antarctic Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 2401). This Act provides for the conservation and protection of the fauna and flora of Antarctica and of the ecosystem upon which they depend. The primary prohibitions of the Act make it unlawful for any U.S. citizen to take any native bird or mammal in Antarctica or to collect any native plant from any specially protected area within Antarctica. In addition, the Act makes it unlawful for any U.S. citizen or any foreign person in the United States to possess, sell, offer for sale, deliver, receive, carry, transport, import, export, or attempt to import

The primary prohibitions of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act make it illegal for any person to excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any archaeological resource located on public or Indian lands without a permit.

or export from the United States any native mammal or bird taken in Antarctica or any plant collected in any specially protected area.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470aa). This Act protects archaeological resources and sites on public and Indian lands, and fosters increased exchange of information and cooperation among governmental authorities, the professional archaeological community, and private individuals who own collections of archaeological resources and data obtained before October 31, 1979. The primary prohibitions of the Act make it illegal for any person to excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any archaeological resource located on public or Indian lands without a permit. In addition, the Act makes it illegal for any person to sell, purchase, exchange, transport, receive, or offer to sell, purchase, or exchange any archaeological resource taken from public or Indian lands in violation of Federal, state, or local law.

African Elephant Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4201-4245). This Act provides additional protection for the African elephant. It established an assistance program for elephant-producing countries of Africa and provided for the creation of an African Elephant Conservation Fund. In addition, the Act places a moratorium on the importation of raw or worked ivory from African elephant-producing countries that do not meet certain criteria.

Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992 (16 U.S.C. 4901). This Act promotes the conservation of exotic birds by encouraging wild bird conservation and management programs in countries of origin; by ensuring that all U.S. trade in such species is biologically sustainable and to the benefit of the species; and by limiting or prohibiting imports of exotic birds when necessary to ensure that exotic wild populations are not harmed by removal for the trade.

During FY 1997, the Service's law enforcement function was organized into seven law enforcement regions, each managed by an Assistant Regional Director for Law Enforcement who reported to the Regional Director, and a Washington Office Law Enforcement staff that reported to the Assistant Director for Refuges and Wildlife. The seven regional law enforcement offices assist Regional Directors in administering the law enforcement responsibilities of the Service. Each regional law enforcement office administers the law enforcement program through senior resident agents, special agents, and wildlife inspectors located within the region.

Region/Address	Area of Jurisdiction
All addresses begin: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Law Enforcement	
1 911 N.E. 11th Avenue Portland, OR 97232-4181 (503) 231-6125	California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands
2 P.O. Box 329 Albuquerque, NM 87103 (505) 248-7889	Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas
3 P.O. Box 45, Fed. Bldg. Fort Snelling, MN 55111-0045 (612) 713-5320	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin
4 P.O. Box 49226 Atlanta, GA 30359 (404) 679-7057	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the Virgin Islands
5 300 Westgate Center Drive Hadley, MA 01035 (413) 253-8274	Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia
6 P.O. Box 25486-DFC Denver, CO 80225 (303) 236-7540	Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming
7 P.O. Box 92597 Anchorage, AK 99509-2597 (907) 786-3311	Alaska
9 P.O. Box 3247 Arlington, VA 22203-3247 (703) 358-1949	Headquarters Office

AGENT DUTY STATIONS

STATE	CHIEF DEPUTY	ASD/1 SAC	DEPUTY ASD	SR RESIDENT AGENT	SPECIAL AGENT	TOTAL
Alabama					2	2
Alaska		1	1	1	8	11
Arizona				1	6	7
Arkansas					2	2
California				2	18	20
Colorado		1	1	1	3	6
Connecticut					1	1
Delaware					1	1
District of Columbia	1	3			13	17
Florida				2	8	10
Georgia		1			3	4
Guam					1	1
Hawaii					2	2
Idaho				1	2	3
Illinois				1	4	5
Indiana					1	1
Iowa					1	1
Kansas				1	1	2
Kentucky					1	1
Louisiana				1	7	8
Maine					1	1
Maryland					3	3
Massachusetts		1		1	2	4
Michigan					4	4
Minnesota			1		4	5
Mississippi					3	3
Missouri				1	4	5
Montana				1	3	4
Nebraska					2	2
Nevada					2	2
New Hampshire					1	1
New Jersey					4	4
New Mexico		1	1	1	2	5
New York				1	7	8
North Carolina				1	3	4
North Dakota					2	2
Ohio					2	2
Oklahoma				1	3	4
Oregon		1	1	1	3	6
Pennsylvania					3	3
Puerto Rico					1	1
Rhode Island						0
South Carolina					2	2
South Dakota				1	1	2
Tennessee				1	2	3
Texas				2	15	17
Utah				1	2	3
Vermont					1	1
Virginia					6	6
Washington				1	7	8
West Virginia					1	1
Wisconsin					4	4
Wyoming				1	2	3
TOTAL	1	9	5	26	187	228

1/Assistant Regional Director for Law Enforcement; Special Agent in Charge
As of October 1, 1997

The Branch of Special Operations covertly investigates commercial wildlife crime that is national or international in scope.

Washington Office Organization

The following is a general description of the responsibilities of each branch of the Washington Office of the Division of Law Enforcement.

Office of the Chief

The Chief is the top ranking officer of the Division of Law Enforcement and the administrator of the Service's law enforcement program. This person is responsible for planning, developing, and directing all matters pertaining to investigations and law enforcement throughout the Service. The Chief serves as the Director's principal adviser on such matters and coordinates all investigative activities in cooperation with line field officials.

Branch of Technical and Field Support

The Branch of Technical and Field Support is responsible for a wide range of activities pertaining to administrative matters, budget formulation and execution, workload and funding planning and analysis, Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act responses, national computer support, and other related issues.

Implementing the concept that Federal wildlife efforts would benefit from computerized information, the Service developed the Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS), which became operational on October 1, 1983. LEMIS, an interactive, real-time minicomputer system based in the Washington Office, now consists of more than 100 remote terminals at regional offices and selected locations around the country. The system includes subsystems featuring information on investigations, permits and licenses, import-export declarations, protected species, and employee skills.

Branch of Investigations

Supervised by a Special Agent in Charge, the Branch of Investigations is responsible for ensuring that Service law enforcement policies and procedures are followed nationwide.

The Branch is also responsible for developing policy and coordinating international enforcement efforts. The Branch works extensively on matters concerning Service obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, develops and coordinates policy for the wildlife inspection program, and serves as liaison for the Automated Commercial System (an electronic database of wildlife imports and exports) with the U.S. Customs Service.

Branch of Special Operations

The Branch of Special Operations consists of a Special Agent in Charge, an Assistant Special Agent in Charge, and six field agents. The Branch covertly investigates commercial wildlife crime that is national or international in scope. It also provides undercover investigative support to the regions and collects, develops, and records intelligence information.

Branch of Training and Inspection

The Branch of Training and Inspection is one of 17 full-time offices maintained by participating agencies at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia. The Special Agent in Charge and the Special Agent Training Officer develop, coordinate, and conduct training activities for new agents and inspectors, as well as advanced and annual training. The Branch also develops special programs featuring academic and applied course work for refuge officers, state conservation officers, and enforcement personnel from the U.S. Customs Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and foreign governments.

In FY 1997, the Special Agent in Charge and the Special Agent Training Officer were transferred to the Washington Office in Arlington, Virginia. In addition, a special agent was assigned to the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

Forensics Laboratory

Effective January 5, 1997, the Clark R. Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory was organizationally aligned under the Chief, Division of Law Enforcement. The Laboratory, located in Ashland, Oregon, was originally aligned under the Regional Director, Region One, during its initial design, construction, and start-up phases in order to facilitate completion of those efforts.

The issue of measuring law enforcement efforts is a subject of continuing examination. Although data on the number of violations adjudicated during 1995, 1996, and 1997 are presented below, this measure of law enforcement activity is commonly accepted as representing, at best, only an indirect measure of enforcement effectiveness.

No reliable direct measures of law enforcement effectiveness have yet been developed. However, the Service believes that the effectiveness of its law enforcement effort can be maximized by focusing on the illegal commercialization of wildlife.

The Service believes that the chief value of law enforcement to preserving wildlife is through the deterrent it creates. Deterrence is only effective among individuals who recognize that their acts are illegal.

Accordingly, the Service has used covert investigations to identify violators who are involved in sophisticated activities that would escape detection by traditional overt methods. By apprehending such violators, the Service hopes to deter large-scale illegal operations.

In addition to conducting investigations, Service special agents are occasionally called upon to assist other Federal law enforcement agencies in providing law enforcement or security support. In FY 1996, for example, increased terrorist activity in the United States prompted the Service to join other Federal agencies in providing security for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. A contingent of 15 special agents and refuge officers were detailed to different locations where Olympic events took place, providing armed security to the athletes at various competition venues.

Annual Violation Statistics*
FY 1995 - FY 1997

	1995	1996	1997
Violations	5,164	4,582	5,477
Fines	$1,082,111	$1,670,420	$1,608,787
Jail (Yrs)	51	53	21
Probation (Yrs)	450	681	407
Civil Penalties	$116,169	$126,132	$168,044

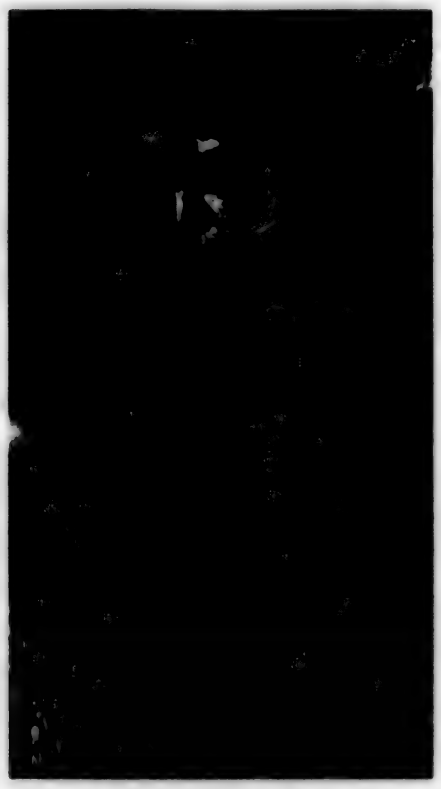
*Data compiled as of 07/23/98

FY 1997 INVESTIGATIVE CASELOAD

CLASSIFICATION	Investigative Cases	Workload Hours Worked
Assault	3	22
Eagle Protection	267	21,972
Lacey	1,844	146,329
National Wildlife Refuge	451	18,562
Migratory Bird Stamp	247	887
Migratory Bird Treaty	3,022	82,322
Endangered Species	4,769	90,965
Incident Report	2	19
Marine Mammal Protection	187	2,778
Airborne Hunting	18	1,710
Other Federal Laws	108	1,779
State Laws	120	2,972
Miscellaneous Investigations	556	8,774
Unable to Investigate	5	19
Permit/License Investigations	9	87
Archaeological Resources	6	761
African Elephant Conservation	49	534
Wild Bird Conservation	31	267
TOTAL	11,694	380,159

As of 07/22/98

Habitat modification caused by timber harvest on private land in Lane County, Oregon, that would potentially affect the northern spotted owl, a threatened species, resulted in the issuance of a temporary restraining order in November 1996.



Timber harvest poses threat to northern spotted owl habitat.
J & K Hollingsworth/USFWS

Region One

Region One stretches from Canada to Mexico and bridges the Pacific; it includes California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

As of September 30, 1997, the region had 41 special agent positions, representing 18 percent of the Service's special agent force, and 31 wildlife inspector positions, representing 32 percent of the agency's wildlife inspector force. Five of the Service's 13 designated ports for wildlife imports and exports are located in Region One.

The unauthorized taking of endangered species as a result of habitat destruction is an enforcement priority in the region because of the long-lasting adverse impact such activity has on species. An investigation into the unauthorized taking of endangered Morro shoulderband (banded dune) snails caused by the destruction of habitat in San Luis Obispo County, California, was concluded this fiscal year. The subject of the investigation, a construction and development company, was building a residential subdivision and golf course. The investigation revealed that during the grading for the golf course the company failed to comply with mitigation requirements for the Morro shoulderband snail that were included in county permits. The grading, which covered 10 acres, resulted in a "take" of the snail. The company agreed to a settlement with the Service and paid a $50,000 civil penalty; these funds will be used for the benefit of the Morro shoulderband snail and for purchasing an additional 10 acres of suitable snail habitat. This property, valued at more than $750,000, was transferred to the California state park system for management.

Habitat modification caused by timber harvest on private land in Lane County, Oregon, that would potentially affect the northern spotted owl, a threatened species, resulted in the issuance of a temporary restraining order in November 1996. The Service sought the order after the timber company involved ignored agency correspondence advising of the potential "take" that might occur and proceeded with the harvest. The matter went to trial in April 1997, and the U.S. District Court granted the government's petition for an injunction but limited its duration to one year from the date of the order. During the injunctive period, the Service was ordered to conduct a radio-telemetry study of a northern spotted owl pair known to frequent the area to determine the birds' actual home range. Initial data support the government's position that the owls actively use the sites where habitat would be modified by the proposed timber harvest.

Cooperative enforcement efforts to protect habitat of the endangered snowy plover at Vandenberg Air Force Base continued during the third year of this pilot program. The main emphasis was on enforcement of the seasonal closure of the dune and high beach areas on the base to reduce or eliminate the impact of humans and animals (horses and dogs) on breeding activities in the plover's largest active breeding colony on the Pacific coast. The most common violations included trespass in the closed area and unleashed dogs. Although more than 60 citations were issued, the number of violations dropped from the previous two years, indicating that the project may be securing increased compliance from the public.

The unauthorized killing of Federal trust species as a result of poisoning and other environmental hazards is a growing concern in Region One. A large multinational corporation pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in the Western District of Washington to a one-count information charging them with violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act by illegally poisoning birds. The corporation employed a local pest control business to use a product known as "RID-A-BIRD" to control starlings; fenthion is the active ingredient in the product. Both the corporation and the pest control business had been previously warned that RID-A-BIRD perches also killed non-target species. Part of the sentencing required that the corporation

The unauthorized killing of Federal trust species as a result of poisoning and other environmental hazards is a growing concern in Region One.

Pest controls like "RID-A-BIRD" pose significant risks to raptors and other non-target birds.

place $100,000 in an escrow account to fund research on alternate methods of controlling pest birds. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will review the study, and no cap was to be placed on its cost by the corporation. As a result of the investigation, the RID-A-BIRD company and the Environmental Protection Agency reached an agreement to voluntarily cancel all use of this product. The Service has long recognized the significant risk posed by RID-A-BIRD to non-target birds, particularly raptors.

In the spring of 1997, a task force was formed to address migratory bird losses at oil production facilities in Kern County, California. Participants included the Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the California Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources. Members of the task force met with oil production representatives to discuss the problem and offer guidance concerning corrective measures. Aerial surveys of oil production facilities were conducted to identify potential problem sites. Owners were notified and given 30 days to correct deficiencies. Most companies took corrective action. Ground inspections were conducted after the 30-day grace period, and evidence of unlawful migratory bird losses was collected at some sites. Five corporations were charged with violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and it is anticipated that two additional companies will be charged.

Efforts to control the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products remain a priority. Service special agents in California seized one black rhinoceros head with horns attached from a man attempting to sell it in interstate commerce. The offer for sale appeared in a national paper, the *Antique Trader*, and the head was also advertised on the Internet. Covert contact with the seller resulted in an agreement to sell the mount for $45,000. Although the mount was old and in poor condition, each of the horns had been advertised for $85,000. The rhino mount was seized and forfeited, and a $5,000 civil penalty was assessed.

Packages containing crystallized bear bile were intercepted at the Los Angeles International Mail Facility on two separate occasions. Both packages originated in China and were destined for two unrelated Korean acupuncture/herbal medicine businesses in the Korea-town area of Los Angeles. Service agents secured anticipatory search warrants based on controlled deliveries of the packages to the recipients. Subsequent searches of the businesses conducted by a joint agency task force produced the seizure of more than 32 whole gall bladders; nearly 1,700 grams of crystallized bear bile; 600 milliliters of liquid bear bile; hundreds of pills containing bear and other protected wildlife; and many additional wildlife parts used for their medicinal value. Bears and other protected species and their products are sold for use in the Asian medicinal trade. They are generally used as aphrodisiacs or palliatives for over-drinking, over-smoking, stomach disorders, etc. Both investigations are continuing.

In another case involving the illegal importation of bear parts, a San Francisco, California, man was apprehended at San Francisco International Airport when he claimed his unaccompanied suitcase at Asiana Airlines. Inside were four Asian bear forearms and paws. The suitcase had been misdirected from China to South America; it was subsequently routed from South America to Los Angeles where the Asian bear parts were discovered. Wildlife inspectors in Los Angeles identified the bear parts and arranged for the suitcase to be forwarded to San Francisco for a controlled delivery. The man was issued a Notice of Violation and abandoned the wildlife items. This case involved the cooperation of the U.S. Customs Service in Los Angeles and the Clark R. Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, which positively identified the items as bear.

Service special agents and wildlife inspectors assisted the U.S. Customs Service with the execution of multiple search warrants related to a smuggling operation at the Los Angeles seaport. For more than two years,

For more than two years, subjects had been smuggling Asian medicinals and clothing in freight containers manifested as knock-down furniture and plastic bags—items that would not require Food and Drug Administration or Service clearance.

subjects had been smuggling Asian medicinals and clothing in freight containers manifested as knock-down furniture and plastic bags—items that would not require Food and Drug Administration or Service clearance. Many of the medicines were labeled as containing endangered and/or protected species. The operation involved Container Freight Stations (CFS) where cargo containers with multiple import entries are split up and held in bonded warehouses awaiting the filing of a Customs entry. The leader of the conspiracy arranged with CFS owners to have illegal shipments delivered to his warehouses before entries were ever filed. If Customs called for an inspection, they had a container full of the declared items at the CFS, which was substituted for the illegal shipment.

Special agents in Torrance, California, received information that a well-known importer of live birds for the pet trade was offering hill mynas (*Gracula religiosa*) for sale. An investigation revealed that the importer had declared a total of 1,500 Ceylon mynas (*Gracula ptilogenys*) on a recently filed Fish and Wildlife declaration, but had failed to declare the prohibited species which were lumped in with the Ceylon mynas. When the birds were inspected at a quarantine station, it was determined that 89 of them were hill mynas. The importer told the officers that she pays about $60 each for the hill mynas and sells them for about $250. At the close of quarantine, the 89 birds were seized, abandoned by the importer, and auctioned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The matter has been referred to the field solicitor for assessment of a civil penalty.

Following up on a tip provided by the San Diego Police Department, special agents in California identified two subjects involved in the unlawful importation of live rock and marine fish species from Mexico. This investigation is being conducted jointly by the Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and Mexican authorities. Approximately 870 pounds of live rock were confiscated. Subsequent investigation revealed that the individuals had been unlawfully importing live rock into the United States for approximately five years. As a result of this and other investigations, the Service has developed a closer working relationship with counterparts in Tijuana, Mexico.

Rhino horns are advertised for as much as $85,000 on the black market. J & K Hollingsworth/ USFWS

Asian medicinals purportedly contain tiger bone and rhino horn. USFWS

An Idaho reptile dealer agreed to plead guilty to five state charges and one Federal Endangered Species Act violation for illegal reptile collecting and sale. Reptiles, including snakes, lizards, desert tortoises, and Gila monsters, were illegally collected from the wild in Utah, Nevada, and Arizona and sold to buyers in other states. The investigation was conducted jointly with officers from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Cooperative efforts continued with states, tribes, and other entities to limit the direct take of wildlife, including endangered species and migratory birds. Special agents in California participated in the Coachella Valley Conservation Officers Group, which includes law enforcement officers from the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the California Highway Patrol. Saturation patrols were conducted to deter and apprehend individuals who violate environmental laws in the Mojave Desert. Major efforts were directed at the growing number of incidents involving the unlawful take and transportation of wildlife from state and Federal lands located in the Southern California deserts, including national wildlife refuges, national parks, state parks, and public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

A cooperative investigation with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife into the 1996 killing of an endangered woodland caribou was successfully concluded with the prosecution of three Washington State residents in Federal court. The men killed the caribou while illegally hunting deer and disposed of a radio-telemetry collar it was wearing. The men paid fines totaling $1,500 and restitution totaling $4,842 to the Selkirk Woodland Caribou Recovery Program. Each man was also placed on three years probation.

Special agents continued to enforce migratory game bird hunting regulations in the fall and winter months, particularly in California.

The former owner of an Idaho big game hunting service was sentenced in U.S. District Court after pleading guilty to three Lacey Act violations. The man was sentenced to eight months in prison, six months home detention, five years probation, and $7,000 in fines for his part in a scheme to provide illegal big game hunts in Idaho for Florida hunters. Twenty-one other defendants involved in the scheme, including guides and Florida clients, were charged in either state or Federal court and paid fines totaling $16,000. They also received probation totaling 38 years.

A Montana big game hunting guide, who lived in Washington State, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court to eight counts of violating the Lacey Act and one count of violating the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. He admitted to illegally killing three bighorn sheep, two black bears, two cougars, and a wolverine. He was also found to be in illegal possession of eagle parts. He was fined $5,000, sentenced to six months in jail, and placed on three years probation. The investigation produced evidence that the man had been involved in over 20 illegal big game kills during a four-year period.

An aquaculture facility in central California was investigated for the unlawful take of migratory birds believed to be preying on the fish. The intentional killing of migratory birds at fish-rearing facilities remains a problem throughout the region. An interesting development in this investigation was the discovery of the illegal use of quinaldine, an anaesthetic used to transport fish. The use of quinaldine is illegal if the fish are for human consumption. The California fish dealer pleaded guilty to one violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and one violation of another Federal law and paid a $7,750 fine. A follow-up investigation of another fish farm in Oklahoma resulted in a $30,000 fine.

Special agents continued to enforce migratory game bird hunting regulations in the fall and winter months, particularly in California. During the 1996-97 hunting season, 175 Federal citations were issued to hunters in Northern California, resulting in more than $25,900 in monetary forfeitures.

Continuing a program that began the previous fiscal year, the Service administered an intergovernmental contract with the Bonneville Power Administration for funding of the Increased Levels of Harvest and Habitat Law Enforcement and Public Awareness for Anadromous Salmonids and Resident Fish in the Columbia River Basin project. This effort involves the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Enforcement, Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Shonshone-Bannock Tribes, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and Nez Perce Tribe, representing the Columbia Basin Law Enforcement Council. The goal of the project is to enhance protection of anadromous salmonids and resident fish by reducing unlawful harvest and habitat degradation and increasing public awareness. The project is an integral part of the Columbia River Fisheries Management Plan; it directly addresses the goals and objectives identified by the Northwest Power Planning Council in rebuilding stocks of endangered and threatened species. A budget of $4.457 million was allocated to the project in calendar year 1997.

Special agents assisted with special enforcement problems that arose in national wildlife refuges. Surveillance on the Pahranagat National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada established that refuge boundary fences were being cut, destroyed, and manipulated to allow cattle to illegally graze on the refuge. The owner of the cattle threatened refuge officers when they confronted him and asked him to remove his cattle. An investigation documented 26 incidents where boundary fences had been manipulated or destroyed. Immediately prior to trial in U.S. District Court, the rancher pleaded guilty and acknowledged that he had cut and destroyed refuge boundary fences to allow his cattle access to refuge forage. Sentencing was scheduled for

Service special agents and refuge officers from the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge jointly investigated the report of a hunter threatening other hunters.

January 1998. The defendant had a previous felony conviction for cattle rustling.

Service special agents and refuge officers from the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge jointly investigated the report of a hunter threatening other hunters. In early 1996, the same individual had been cited for trespass on the refuge. The investigation revealed that the defendant threatened to shoot other hunters who were too close to his decoy spread on several occasions. The trial was interesting: the defendant openly admitted to the threats, and his behavior in court required the presence of four deputy U.S. marshals. The hunter was found guilty, fined $310, and placed on two years probation.

Region Two

Law enforcement activities in Region Two support programs for wildlife resources, fishery resources, and endangered species. The region, which encompasses Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas, had a force of 81 special agents and 12 wildlife inspectors at the end of the fiscal year. Region Two includes the designated port of Dallas/Fort Worth, the non-designated port of Houston, as well as the border ports of El Paso, Laredo, and Brownsville, Texas, and Nogales, Arizona.

During FY 1997, special agents coordinated joint oil field task force inspections of well sites in eastern and northern Oklahoma to check for netting compliance and migratory bird mortality in open pits and tanks. The operation was set up in conjunction with the Oklahoma Environmental Crimes Task Force; participating agencies included the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Department of the Interior Office of Inspector General. Team inspections documented 288 well sites with no netting or insufficient netting (159 of which were not identified with the required signs) and recovered 19 oiled, migratory bird carcasses from open tanks and pits operated by eight companies. Three Violation Notices with collateral fines totaling $2,100 were issued. An additional five well sites were referred to the Oklahoma Corporation Commission for significant crude oil or salt water spillage, and one site was immediately shut down. Letters have been sent to those companies whose facilities were improperly netted.

Waterfowl such as Canada geese are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Wyman Meinzer/USFWS

The prosecution phase of Operation Four Corners—a two-year undercover investigation into the unlawful commercialization of migratory birds — continued.

Commercialization of migratory bird feathers is a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. USFWS

A joint undercover operation was terminated on August 22, 1997, in the Paris, Texas, and Hugo, Oklahoma areas. Teams of Service special agents and Texas and Oklahoma game wardens apprehended five subjects previously documented with commercial game fish trafficking and other wildlife violations. Three defendants were arrested on multiple Texas misdemeanor violations and remanded to the county jail in lieu of bonds totaling $45,000. Two defendants were issued Texas citations for trafficking in game fish and electronic shocking devices. Two additional defendants were subsequently interviewed and confessed to Texas and Oklahoma game fish and shocking device trafficking offenses. Both have been charged in Texas and Oklahoma courts. The takedown resulted in the seizure and forfeiture of a 13-foot flat-bottom boat, 500 pounds of illegally taken catfish, and a chest freezer.

An investigation regarding the illegal take and transport of a trophy Colorado bighorn sheep resulted in the seizure of the horns when the defendant delivered them to a Denton, Texas, taxidermist and the execution of a Federal search warrant at the defendant's residence. Service special agents ultimately seized an additional sheep mount with the horn-plug removed and verified that the defendant was laundering the recent bighorn sheep trophy with this plug. They also seized a mounted bald eagle, three mounted owls, a sawed-off shotgun, and a stolen Polaris all-terrain cycle at the residence. The subject agreed to a criminal fine of $5,000, civil restitution to Colorado totaling $5,000, forfeiture of all seized property, and five years supervised probation in conjunction with revocation of his hunting privilege.

Service special agents concluded an investigation of an ostrich meat company that documented the unlawful export of 56 shipments of processed ostrich meat worth more than $1.5 billion. The company had been warned that such shipments required declaration forms after wildlife inspectors at Dallas-Fort Worth Airport learned that the firm was exporting ostrich meat to Europe. The company was notified about the regulations and not sanctioned with the understanding that future shipments would be properly declared. Information was developed several months later that clearly indicated that the company continued to export ostrich meat without filing export declarations. The company has agreed to pay an $8,000 civil penalty.

Service special agents concluded all litigation resulting from the Dallas/Forth Worth, Texas, taxidermy business inspection conducted in the spring of 1997. Teams of special agents and Texas game wardens inspected 120 taxidermists in the area and documented 16 Federal and/or state violations. Texas criminal fines and Federal collateral fines totaled $1,756.50, and all seized wildlife was forfeited.

The 1996 investigation of the illegal take of 51 Canada geese resulted in four defendants paying a total of $4,170 in fines for jump-shooting the birds near Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.

The prosecution phase of Operation Four Corners—a two-year undercover investigation into the unlawful commercialization of migratory birds —continued. Formal charges were initiated through three judicial districts and four Federal courts. Forty individuals and/or businesses have been charged with 113 Federal violations, including 36 felonies. During the investigation, agents purchased or seized over 300 items of evidence, including 12 bald and golden eagle carcasses. Thus far, 32 of the defendants charged have been convicted. Defendants have paid approximately $23,000 in fines and/or restitution, forfeited over $12,000 in property, and been sentenced to over five years probation and/or home confinement. Approximately 10 more individuals are under investigation and will be charged soon, bringing the total number of defendants in the case to approximately 50. To date, this case has involved 4,000 hours of agent investigation, nearly 300 case reports, and over 50 search warrants, arrest warrants, criminal complaints, and indictments, making it one of the largest cases ever investigated by Service agents.

A joint operation involving the U.S. Customs Service and the Service is coming to a close. This investigation used an undercover storefront to target and penetrate organized smuggling rings dealing in exotic psittacine birds.

Two Arizona subjects were investigated for the unlawful take and possession of a golden eagle. Both were subsequently convicted in the District of Arizona. One received a $1,000 fine, and the other was sentenced to six months in Federal prison.

A joint investigation with undercover officers of the Arizona Game and Fish Department resulted in the conviction of a defendant who acted as a guide on unlawful big game hunts. The individual was found guilty of five state charges and fined $4,200.

The Service began an investigation after an abandoned car was found on the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge and attempts to locate the owner were unsuccessful. Agents learned that the possible owner had a lengthy criminal record (including assault on a Federal officer) and submitted an investigative lead to another Service Regional Office to locate and interview the subject. The subject, who was arrested by a Montana game warden, confessed to a homicide on the Kofa refuge; searches by Service and Yuma County officers uncovered evidence to substantiate that confession. The subject is expected to be extradited to Arizona from Montana.

Service special agents arrested a Mexican national when he attempted to smuggle 23 live ostrich chicks from Mexico to the United States near Nogales, Arizona. The defendant was subsequently indicted in Tucson on one felony smuggling count and one felony Lacey Act count. Under a plea agreement, the defendant was sentenced to five months incarceration and 36 months supervised probation.

Two subjects, both residents of the Republic of South Africa, were identified as having smuggled reptiles from the United States through New York. As a result of the Service's investigation, three Notices of Violation totaling $2,200 were subsequently issued. Voluntary statements were obtained, and a pre-prosecution agreement was reached by e-mail communication between Arizona and the Republic of South Africa.

Two defendants were prosecuted for illegally smuggling snakes, concealed in their underwear, into the United States. In a plea bargain, the defendants agreed to pay $5,500 each in restitution for care of the snakes and serve three years of supervised probation. The pair pleaded guilty to two felony and two misdemeanor counts.

A defendant attempted to smuggle six black-handed spider monkeys and one kinkajou through the port of Laredo. He was charged with a one-count violation of the Endangered Species Act. A plea agreement was reached which included a 10-month jail sentence and abandonment of the monkeys.

Three individuals were charged with Lacey Act violations involving illegal entry of deer trophies from Mexico. A plea bargain was reached, and the defendants agreed to pay an $8,000 fine each and have an 18-month sentence deferred to pretrial adjudication.

A joint operation involving the U.S. Customs Service and the Service is coming to a close. This investigation used an undercover storefront to target and penetrate organized smuggling rings dealing in exotic psittacine birds. The operation has resulted in the seizure of 574 wildlife specimens with an estimated value of $250,000 and produced 24 arrests, nine indictments, and seven convictions for customs and wildlife violations.

A major city on the Gulf Coast of Texas was investigated for the third time for the unlawful take of non-game migratory birds by uncovered ballast pits. Service special agents collected over 20 migratory birds from a pit. The pits have been fenced and covered at a cost of $16,500, and the defendant was issued a $1,000 Notice of Violation for the unlawful take of protected birds.

Undercover work by Service law enforcement agents set the scene in April 1997 for a dramatic raid at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, where a group of suspected wildlife poachers were assembled for the opening weekend of the state's turkey season.

Service special agents and refuge officers are working with the Hildalgo County Sheriff's Office and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to identify human bones discovered in the Gabrielson Refuge Tract on the Rio Grande River south of Mission, Texas. AMERiCORPS workers, running Global Positioning System point locations for a refuge survey, found the bones in a remote area about two miles from the main refuge road. The bones (lower jaw, rib, hip, and leg bones) were retrieved by the sheriff's office and county coroner. About two years ago, the upper skull of a human was found in the same general location. Attempts are being made to match the jaw and skull. The sex and age of the bones and time of death have not yet been determined. The bones, however, are small and appear to be those of either a small-framed male or female or possibly a child.

A Lacey Act investigation involving elk illegally killed in New Mexico resulted in two defendants pleading guilty in state court to several state charges. Both received suspended jail sentences, were banned from hunting or guiding in New Mexico for two years, and were required to make a $5,000 donation to the New Mexico Game Protection Fund.

Service special agents worked with officials from the Jicarilla Apache Tribe who reported that an elk was poached on tribal lands. Investigators determined that three subjects were involved in the incident. As the result of a plea agreement, each will pay $1,670 in restitution to the Jicarilla Tribe for the loss of the bull elk and a $1,500 fine. The three must also perform community service by lecturing about poaching for two hunter safety courses and will lose hunting rights anywhere in the United States for three years.

A defendant was issued a Notice of Violation for $5,000 for smuggling macaws in violation of CITES. Through an agreement with the U.S. Attorney's Office, the defendant agreed to pay $2,500.

Region Three

Region Three covers the midwestern states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Four of the five Great Lakes—Superior, Huron, Michigan, and Erie—are also located in Region Three. As of September 30, 1997, 28 special agents and nine wildlife inspectors were assigned to this region. Inspection services are provided at the designated port of Chicago and the non-designated ports of Detroit and Minneapolis/St. Paul.

Undercover work by Service law enforcement agents set the scene in April 1997 for a dramatic raid at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, where a group of suspected wildlife poachers were assembled for the opening weekend of the state's turkey season. The operation began in early 1996 when Service special agents, acting on information from the Army, organized an undercover effort in which agents joined the loose-knit group of suspected poachers. Undercover agents contacted members of the group and spent the next year participating in hunting trips and observing illegal activity. During the year, agents witnessed a variety of wildlife law violations, including hunting out of season, exceeding legal bag limits, and using illegal and unsafe hunting methods to kill deer, turkeys, doves, and mountain lions. Violations occurred in Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, and Colorado. Much of the suspected illegal hunting took place at Fort Leonard Wood in highly populated areas such as housing districts, or in areas used for military training exercises. Approximately 20 individuals were contacted and could be charged in Federal court with more than 100 violations of Federal and state wildlife laws as well as possession of illegal drugs and theft of government property. Additional searches were conducted in St. Louis and Potosi, Missouri, where agents found more illegally taken wildlife.

Service law enforcement agents in southern Illinois concluded a three-year investigation into an international wildlife trafficking scheme that included smuggling of rare and protected reptiles from Spain and the shipment of

On February 26, 1997, a St. Paul, Minnesota, resident appeared before a U.S. magistrate and pleaded guilty to the unlawful take of an eastern timber wolf (an endangered species) by poison.

Deer are often hunted out of season or by use of illegal hunting methods. USFWS

nearly 70 poisonous snakes through the U.S. mail in unmarked packages to avoid detection by authorities. In a search of the suspected trafficker's residence, agents found records and documents chronicling 10 years of reptile smuggling to and from Spain, France, and South Africa. Reptiles included Lilford's wall lizards, European ladder ratsnakes, box turtles illegally collected from a national wildlife refuge, venomous massasauga rattlesnakes, Great Plains ratsnakes, which are listed as a threatened species in Illinois, and desert tortoises—a species considered threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. An Illinois man pleaded guilty to one felony count of conspiracy to smuggle wildlife into the United States and to trade in protected species in interstate commerce. The subject was sentenced to a $10,000 fine, forfeiture of all reptiles, and two years of supervised probation; the Service will conduct four unannounced inspections of his residence during this period.

On February 26, 1997, a St. Paul, Minnesota, resident appeared before a U.S. magistrate and pleaded guilty to the unlawful take of an eastern timber wolf (an endangered species) by poison. The man was fined $5,000 and placed on supervised probation for one year. A warden with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources started the investigation by looking into the circumstances surrounding the wolf's death in northern Minnesota. Old-fashioned tracking through the snow led to the poison site where officers discovered deer meat laced with cyanide. Service special agents conducted an extensive investigation and executed Federal search warrants at the subject's cabin and residence in Duluth, Minnesota. Agents found 52 packages of white-tail deer meat in the freezer of the subject's residence; these packages were sent to the Service's forensics laboratory in Ashland, Oregon. The laboratory analyzed the DNA of the 52 packages and identified four separate deer, one of which was the exact genetic match to the deer meat found at the poison site.

A five-year cooperative effort by Region Three special agents, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, which was aimed at protecting the Lake Michigan fishery, concluded with final convictions and sentencing in the Casey Fisheries investigation. The lengthy effort, which began as an undercover investigation and ended with grand jury indictments, resulted in the conviction of commercial fishermen and several middlemen who were engaged in marketing illegal fish. Eleven individuals and four corporations were charged and sentenced. Six subjects were convicted of felonies, four of misdemeanors, and one individual paid fines totaling $46,350. One corporation was convicted of a felony, and more than $325,000 was collected in fines, restitution, quota forfeitures, and fishing vessel forfeitures. Five defendants were sentenced to 33 months in prison, and nine were sentenced to a total of 42 months of home confinement. Ten defendants were ordered to serve a total of 23 years of probation. Six of seven wholesale fish dealers permanently lost their fish dealers licenses. Two defendants lost the privilege of fishing for life, while two others lost perch fishing privileges for five years. Three defendants received sentences that included 340 hours of community service. Three commercial fishing vessels were forfeited to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Three Duluth, Minnesota, men paid a total of $7,500 in fines for destroying an eagle nest. The three men, who had bought a parcel of land to develop a gravel operation, discovered an eagle nest tree on the property. Thinking that the nest would jeopardize their project, the men used a chain saw to cut the tree down, destroying the nest. The township board overseeing development eventually disapproved the permit for the gravel operation.

Illegal wildlife trafficking is frequently linked with drug trafficking—a linkage illustrated by a 1997 Service investigation involving a 60-pound Bengal tiger cub named "Tigger." Service special agents were called upon by the Drug Enforcement Administration's Drug Enforcement Task Force after they learned that the Bengal tiger cub had been obtained in Missouri as part of a drug deal involving about $6,000 worth of illegal narcotics. As

Service special agents continued to focus on illegal commercial fishing on the Great Lakes.

agents searched and gathered evidence, they found and confiscated 120 pounds of narcotics, $100,000 in cash, dozens of weapons, vehicles including a race car, and a house, but no tiger cub. Questioning of one of the suspects revealed that "Tigger" had been stashed with an acquaintance in Illinois. The tiger cub was soon located, and agents provided care for the seven-month-old cat until the animal was turned over to rehabilitation specialists.

Service agents throughout Region Three continued to investigate the unlawful take and transportation of freshwater mussels for the cultured pearl industry. Indictments, plea agreements, and sentencing in Federal court for more than 15 defendants yielded restitution payments to the state of Michigan totaling $72,000 as well as significant jail terms. During a routine inspection of a Wisconsin licensed mussel dealer, state conservation wardens discovered mussel shells of state threatened species and mussel shells harvested from rivers other than the Mississippi River, the only legal place to shell in Wisconsin. Investigation revealed that a Minnesota shell dealer sent two divers to the Sugar River in Wisconsin to illegally harvest mussels. The divers brought 680 pounds of shell (which included threatened species) to Minnesota and sold their take to the dealer, who later sold the shell to a corporation. The illegal shell was confiscated, but attempts to save the threatened mussels were unsuccessful. The corporation pleaded guilty to the unlawful interstate transportation and sale of wildlife and paid a $15,000 criminal fine and $20,000 in restitution to the state of Wisconsin.

Service agents and officers from the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources developed a pamphlet entitled "An Officer's Guide to Mussel Enforcement" to help combat the growing problem of illegal commercial shell trafficking. The pamphlet is designed to assist state and local police officers in identifying persons engaged in the illegal shell trade; it provides tips and contacts for dealing with suspects.

Service special agents continued to focus on illegal commercial fishing on the Great Lakes. Two subjects were sentenced in U.S. District Court in Milwaukee after pleading guilty to two Lacey Act felony counts for illegal commercial fishing on Lake Superior. One subject was sentenced to 16 months imprisonment, and the other to 60 days home confinement. Both must pay $34,000 restitution, forfeit their lifetime commercial fishing privileges, and sell their fishing tug and apply the proceeds to the restitution owed.

Special agents in Ohio continued to work closely with NASA and the Ohio Department of Wildlife in monitoring hunting on NASA's 7,000-acre facility in Sandusky, Ohio. NASA and state officials allow a 10-day deer hunting season on the facility each year; Service agents provide support for the hunt, which is under Federal jurisdiction.

Special agents in Region Three joined the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and U.S. Customs Service in a Black Bear Task Force at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The task force, which was designed to apprehend those trafficking in bear parts and in illegally taken or transported bears, documented 16 violations involving bear parts. Several individuals were arrested for smuggling bear galls. In addition, approximately 40 fishermen were cited for attempting to import illegal fish. Over 400 pounds of illegal fish were seized from subjects crossing the U.S.-Canada border. Five sets of moose antlers were also seized, as well as illegal wolf, lynx, and fisher skins.

Region Four

Region Four encompasses 10 southeastern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) and the trust territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. More than 55 million people live in the region, which is also home to 335 species of fish, wildlife, and plants listed by the Federal

Region Four is one of the most active areas of the Nation for the sport hunting of migratory game birds.

government as endangered or threatened. The region's law enforcement staff consisted of 30 special agents and 14 wildlife inspectors at the end of the fiscal year. The region maintains full-time inspection facilities at the designated ports of Miami, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Atlanta, Georgia. Inspectors are also stationed at two non-designated ports—Tampa, Florida, and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Region Four is one of the most active areas of the Nation for the sport hunting of migratory game birds. During the FY 1997 dove and waterfowl hunting season, special agents in the region charged hunters with 1,605 violations of Federal migratory game bird regulations.

In June 1997, a Florida citrus farmer was indicted for taking threatened Florida scrub jays. Despite repeated warnings from Service officials, the farmer cleared some of the last remaining virgin scrub jay habitat in the area. The farmer refused to follow the Habitat Conservation Plan process established under the Endangered Species Act and leveled 400 acres that were home to 80 Florida scrub jays. The man, who pleaded guilty to violating the Endangered Species Act, was sentenced to pay a $17,500 fine, serve six months of active probation, and pay $17,500 in restitution to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

A former South Carolina fish and game commissioner was indicted for felony violations of the Lacey Act related to the illegal transportation of white-tailed deer in a "canned hunt" operation. He was fined $5,000, placed on three years probation, and prohibited from hunting during that period.

A subject was convicted of killing a threatened Louisiana black bear that wandered near his dog pen in Franklin, Louisiana. The radio-collared bear was shot three times with a .22 magnum rifle from the window of the subject's house trailer. A U.S. magistrate judge sentenced the man to a $500 fine and one year of supervised probation for violating the Endangered Species Act.

The first phase of a multiyear Lacey Act investigation into the illegal interstate and international trade in freshwater mussels in Tennessee concluded with the convictions of 12 individuals. In this phase, a Federal grand jury handed down indictments for 108 counts of Lacey Act violations. Four persons were found guilty of felonies, and eight were convicted of misdemeanors. Sentencing of the 12 resulted in prison terms of 3.5 years, 18 years of probation, and more than $86,000 in restitution.

A subject apprehended smuggling 141 Peruvian red boa constrictors into Miami from Peru was sentenced to two years in prison and fined $25,000.

In Statesville, North Carolina, the owner of a quail shooting preserve was convicted in Federal court of using pole traps to kill 21 migratory birds. Dead blue birds, kestrels, and other protected species were found in piles at the base of the pole trap. The preserve owner was fined $1,750 and placed on probation for one year.

In Georgia, investigative support provided to the Service's Division of Refuges resulted in the successful prosecution of a subject for illegally harvesting over 200,000 board feet of timber from a Service easement property. The individual was sentenced to serve 120 days in jail followed by 120 days house arrest and one year supervised probation and was ordered to pay the costs of probation and house arrest. Since the subject had filed for Chapter 12 bankruptcy, he was not fined or ordered to pay restitution.

In Arkansas, two separate investigations into the misuse of the pesticide Furadan resulted in successful prosecutions. In each case, farmers were soaking grain in the poison and placing it adjacent to their fields, causing the deaths of hundreds of migratory birds. Each farmer was prosecuted in Federal court, fined $5,000, placed on two years active probation, and ordered to perform 80 hours of community service.

In response to the high incident of manatee mortality due to boat strikes, Region Four special agents conducted four task force operations in coordination with refuge officers and the Florida Marine Patrol in Brevard County, Florida.

In response to the high incident of manatee mortality due to boat strikes, Region Four special agents conducted four task force operations in coordination with refuge officers and the Florida Marine Patrol in Brevard County, Florida. The goal was to reduce boat speeds in waterways that have posted restricted speed zones to protected endangered manatees. During the task forces, $100 tickets were issued to 312 boat operators for speeding in the manatee protection zones. Both the public and the media responded positively to the effort.

Over a period of several months, special agents in Tennessee became aware of efforts by several Japanese companies to enter the commercial paddlefish caviar trade in the Southeast. One company in Kentucky applied to the Service's Office of Management Authority (OMA) for a permit to export three metric tons of paddlefish roe to Japan. Upon learning of the permit application, law enforcement officials advised OMA of the possible ramifications for the resource based on past investigations and current intelligence, and coordinated an assessment of the issue with OMA, the Office of Scientific Authority, and state fisheries biologists familiar with paddlefish management. Experts concluded that the proposed harvest (an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 paddlefish would have to die to provide the required quantity of eggs) represented a threat to the resource, and the permit was denied. Discussion of this incident at the 7th annual meeting of the 22-state Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association resulted in a unanimous vote to petition the Service to establish a moratorium on the export of paddlefish eggs as caviar until the states determine a sustainable level of harvest.

In Alabama, a private field trial beagle club, said to be the oldest such club in the state, was prosecuted in Federal court for the illegal use of pole traps to kill 39 raptors. At sentencing, the judge ordered the club to pay $1,000 restitution to the Raptor Rehabilitation Center in Auburn. He also placed the club on two years active probation, a condition of which requires it to incorporate provisions educating members on the protection afforded migratory birds into its by-laws. The club must submit this by-law addition to probation officials and the U.S. magistrate judge for review and approval.

In Mississippi, an investigation into illegal deer poaching on a national wildlife refuge and the assault of the refuge manager by one of the poachers resulted in Federal prosecution of two individuals. The defendant

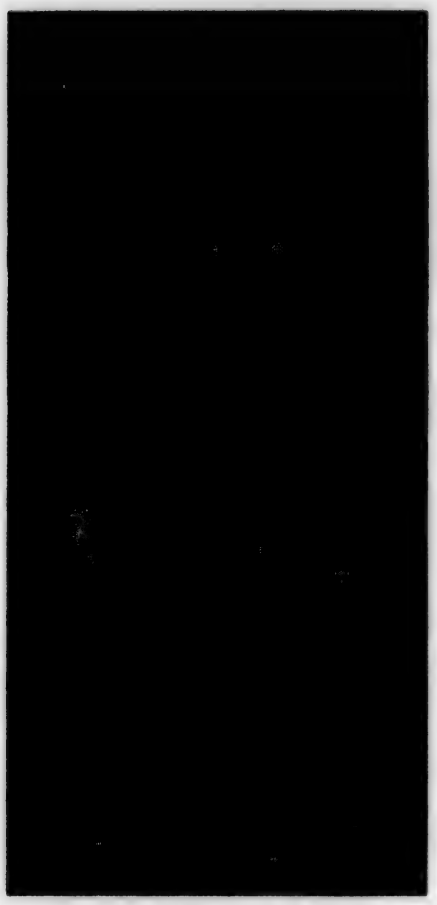
Irresponsible boating contributes to a high number of manatee mortalities. Baylen Ratburn/USFWS

In Miami, efforts to stop commercial trade in the eggs of endangered sea turtles resulted in two major seizures.

who committed the assault was fined $2,050; the second subject was fined $1,025. Both defendants were placed on three years supervised probation. During this period, they may not enter any Federal property or wildlife refuge and are barred from hunting and possessing firearms.

In Arkansas, a group of duck hunters was apprehended with 30 mallards more than the legal limit. Many of the "extra" ducks were found hidden in the woods under a log and in a wooden box buried in the ground. The U.S. magistrate judge hearing the case sentenced the "ring leader" to five years probation during which he may not hunt or even accompany someone who is hunting, and ordered him to pay $9,000 restitution to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and perform 832 hours of community service. Three other hunters were each ordered to pay $3,000 restitution to the Foundation and perform 832 hours of community service; they were also prohibited from hunting for three years.

Memphis, Tennessee—home to the international hub of Federal Express—continues to be ranked by *Parade Magazine* as the world's largest cargo airport. Federal Express imports approximately 40,000 packages per night and exports about 80,000. There are no wildlife inspectors in Memphis, but the special agent stationed there seizes from two to five illegal importations per week in addition to his normal investigative duties.



Illegal trafficking in sea turtle eggs remains a threat to these endangered animals. David Bowman/USFWS

In Lafayette, Louisiana, a Federal district judge took umbrage at the fact that three persons charged with hunting ducks with lead shot appeared to have lied about the facts of the case. He sentenced each hunter to pay $750, serve two years supervised probation, provide 48 hours community service, and pay for the cost of the trial (about $1,200).

In Mobile, Alabama, a taxidermist and hunting guide found himself the subject of a joint Federal-state Lacey Act investigation that reached into Oregon, Kansas, Alaska, Virginia, Colorado, Texas, Mississippi, and Florida. The result was a three-count felony Lacey Act indictment in Mobile for illegal bear taken out of Alaska and a 19-count indictment in Colorado for felony wildlife crime, witness intimidation, and forgery.

Assistance provided to state officials in Tennessee resulted in the Lacey Act convictions of two subjects for the illegal interstate purchase and transportation of 121 raccoons. The animals, which had been taken from a rabies quarantine zone in Ohio, were destined for release to the wild in Tennessee for hound field trials. Each subject paid a $1,025 fine, and the raccoons were seized before they could be released.

In Miami, efforts to stop commercial trade in the eggs of endangered sea turtles resulted in two major seizures. A Boston-bound shipment containing 1,000 eggs invoiced as "cheese and potato chips" was stopped by the Service; a second shipment containing 1,000 eggs invoiced as "vanilla cookies," which was headed for supermarkets in the local Miami area, was also seized. In addition, the Service arrested three individuals who were digging up turtle nests and stealing eggs on state park lands in North Palm Beach. The 209 eggs seized from the three were destined for sale at local bars for $2.00 each.

In North and South Carolina, a joint Federal-state two-year covert investigation into the illegal sale of wildlife parts ended with multiple Federal and state charges for such offenses as selling live bear cubs and violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Lacey Act, and Eagle Protection Act. One raid on a "head shop" failed to produce the eagle parts agents were looking for, but resulted instead in the seizure of cocaine and hashish.

Region Four law enforcement staff participated in numerous outreach efforts. In Miami, 10 TV, radio, and print media organizations, including two foreign TV crews, received information and assistance from law enforcement officials. In North Carolina, a Service special agent was the

Special agents and wildlife inspectors in Region Four routinely provide training and classes in the enforcement of Service laws and regulations.

featured guest on a 30-minute segment of "Outdoors Carolina," and another agent is helping local radio stations in the western part of the state develop "spots" to educate the public on Federal protections for raptors. In Tennessee, a special agent was featured on a prime-time news special on wildlife crime, and special agents stationed in northern Florida appeared on several local TV programs as well as a live "call in" TBS environmental telecast to provide information about migratory game bird hunting regulations.

Special agents and wildlife inspectors in Region Four routinely provide training and classes in the enforcement of Service laws and regulations. During FY 1997, officers conducted about 70 classes and presentations for such diverse audiences as local schools and universities, Boy Scouts, the New Orleans World Trade Club, Canadian and Mexican wildlife officials, Service ecosystem teams, U.S. Customs Service personnel, military Customs officers, state fish and game departments, and commercial customs brokers and freight forwarders. Outreach efforts also reached those participating in events that ranged from Earth Day and Save the Manatee Week to the International Reptile Breeders Symposium.

Region Five

Region Five is one of the most densely populated regions in the Service. It includes the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, as well as the District of Columbia. As of September 30, 1997, 33 special agents were located in this region and 23 wildlife inspectors staffed the designated ports of New York/Newark, Baltimore, and Boston, and the non-designated port of Buffalo.

A wholesale seafood company that pleaded guilty to conspiracy under the Lacey Act was sentenced in Baltimore District Court to two years probation and ordered to pay a $20,000 fine and $40,000 in restitution. A joint investigation with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources had revealed that in 1991 and 1992 the company bought and sold more than 40,000 pounds of striped bass illegally taken from the Potomac River. The company's two principal officers were also charged in the case. One was sentenced to two years probation, three months of community confinement, and three months of home detention with electronic monitoring; he was also fined $5,000 and the cost of the monitoring. The company's president was sentenced to two years probation and six months of home detention and electronic monitoring, and was fined $10,000 and the cost of the monitoring.

A Massachusetts man who had illegally hunted in Alaska from 1990 to 1994 was sentenced in Federal court in Springfield, Massachusetts, for violating Federal wildlife protection laws. The man had falsely obtained an Alaskan hunting license by claiming to be a resident of that state, avoiding thousands of dollars in fees. He purchased the services of Alaskan guides during his illegal hunting activities, and then transported the illegally taken wildlife across state lines to Massachusetts. After a week-long trial during which life-sized mounted animals were entered into evidence, the subject was convicted of six felony counts under the Lacey Act, a statute that regulates the interstate sale and purchase of wildlife. A U.S. District Court judge sentenced the man to two years of supervised probation and a $20,000 fine, and ordered him to pay the state of Alaska $10,000 in restitution for lost hunting license revenue. He is not allowed to hunt or be in the company of people engaged in hunting anywhere in the world during the duration of his probation. The judge also ordered that no firearms would be allowed in the man's residence during the probation period and advised the subject that, as a convicted felon, he will never again be authorized to possess a firearm.

A plea agreement was reached in the criminal case involving the company responsible for the January 1996 oil spill in Block Island Sound off Rhode Island's Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge.

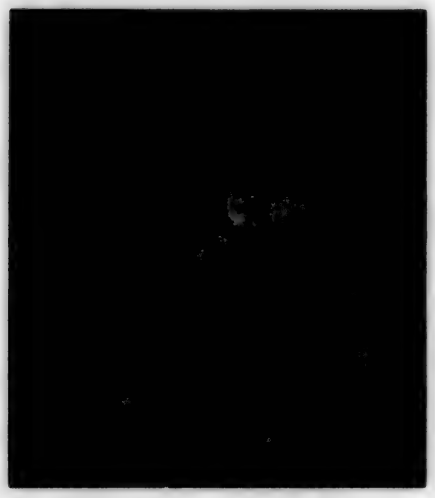
In December 1996, a New York company was convicted of unlawful importation of amphibians under inhumane conditions, a violation of the Lacey Act. All 78 of the rare amphibians died. In May 1997, the firm was sentenced to a $10,000 fine, the maximum penalty permitted by law, and placed on probation for five years to ensure future compliance with wildlife protection laws. The company is one of the Nation's largest wholesale importers of live reptiles, amphibia, and other wildlife for sale to the pet trade.

A plea agreement was reached in the criminal case involving the company responsible for the January 1996 oil spill in Block Island Sound off Rhode Island's Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge. The total fine agreed upon was $8.5 million. Of this amount, $3.5 million will be paid to the Service for violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; these funds will go to the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund. The company will also pay $100,000 to the Oil Spill Liability Trust; $400,000 for a violation of the Refuse Act (a Federal law that prohibits the disposal of refuse in navigable waters that could obstruct navigation); and $1.5 million to The Nature Conservancy for use in purchasing land in the area damaged by the spill. The tug captain and a company officer both agreed to plead guilty to Federal misdemeanor charges related to the spill. The fines agreed to in the settlement will be paid over and above the National Environmental Damage Assessment costs and third-party claims. Investigation of the oil spill was a cooperative effort involving the Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

On September 25, 1997, a resident of Uppsala, Sweden, was formally charged in U.S. District Court with violating felony provisions of the Lacey Act. Earlier that month, the subject had been arrested at Baltimore-Washington International Airport for attempting to export chameleons and lizards concealed in his personal baggage and effects. The man had purchased the reptiles in Maryland at a reptile show and indicated that he planned to use the animals as new bloodline for his current breeding stock in Sweden. The individual pleaded guilty to a one-count information charging him with attempted export of wildlife without properly filing a declaration or obtaining the necessary CITES permit. He was ordered to abandon the nearly $2,000 worth of reptiles to the government and pay a $2,500 fine and special court assessment of $100.

Oil spills have serious consequences for migratory birds and their habitat. Stefan Dobert/USFWS

Before this program got underway, wolves in Wyoming survived an average of seven days outside of Yellowstone before being illegally taken. After the contacts began more than a year ago, no wolves have been killed illegally in the state.



Innovative outreach programs support efforts to protect wolves and other endangered species. J & K Hollingsworth/USFWS

Region Six

Region Six contains some of the Nation's most rugged and varied terrain. As of September 30, 1997, 24 special agents and four wildlife inspectors were employed to handle the Service's law enforcement activities in the states of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas, and at the non-designated ports of entry at Golden, Colorado, and Pembina, North Dakota, and the border port of Great Falls, Montana. The region is also home to the National Eagle and Wildlife Repository in Commerce City, Colorado.

In FY 1997, a Montana rancher was found guilty of illegally killing a grizzly bear after claiming that he shot the bear in self defense. Evidence gathered at the crime scene contradicted that claim. The U.S. District Court for the District of Montana ordered the rancher to pay a $2,000 fine, a $10 special assessment, and $6,250 in restitution. The defendant, who has appealed the case, was also placed on three years probation.

A defendant in Montana pleaded guilty to two counts of violating the Endangered Species Act. Count one was for the illegal taking of five bald eagles, and count two was for the illegal killing of between eight to 15 bald eagles. The defendant was sentenced to six months in prison (to be served in a halfway house), three years probation, $1,500 restitution, and a $50 special assessment.

The Service documented migratory bird mortalities in several oil production pits throughout Wyoming and pursued legal action against three companies. One corporation paid a $5,270 fine for killing 62 migratory birds. A second company paid two fines totaling $4,760 for killing 56 migratory birds in two oil production pits. A third oil company pleaded guilty to killing 11 migratory birds and paid a $2,000 fine.

Special agents in Wyoming developed innovative programs to prevent illegal killings of endangered gray wolves and grizzly bears. After the first two reintroduced wolves that entered Wyoming from Yellowstone National Park were lost within seven days of their leaving the park, the Service launched a new enforcement program. Agents personally contacted stockmen and landowners who were likely to have wolves on their property. The agents explained the laws protecting the wolf, described the behavior and life history of these animals, and provided information on who to call if problems occurred. These contacts continue while wolves remain in the area. Before this program got underway, wolves in Wyoming survived an average of seven days outside of Yellowstone before being illegally taken. After the contacts began more than a year ago, no wolves have been killed illegally in the state.

To prevent illegal killing of grizzly bears, special agents conducted back-country patrols in the Shoshone National Forest of Wyoming. As a result of these patrols, which were conducted in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service, no bears were killed illegally or in self defense in this area. During the year, more than 110 Forest Service citations were issued in the forest for violations of food storage regulations that were implemented to reduce conflicts between humans and grizzlies and keep bears and people from being injured or killed. Such cooperative enforcement efforts can play a key role in preventing grizzly mortalities and promoting the recovery of the species.

The Great Salt Lake in Utah provides outstanding marshes for waterfowl habitat and excellent hunting opportunities for sportsmen. Unfortunately, the number of waterfowl hunting violations in this area has been increasing. Common offenses include over limits, shooting protected species, shooting before or after legal hours, using bait, hunting without licenses or stamps, and using the wrong ammunition. Local Utah conservation officers and Service special agents are greatly outnumbered by hunters who routinely violate the law. To address the problem, approximately 70 Federal and

A joint investigation involving the Service, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and the National Park Service resulted in the identification and prosecution of an individual who illegally shot a five-point bull elk inside Rocky Mountain National Park.

state wildlife officers teamed up to create a waterfowl violation task force. During opening weekend in October, 359 waterfowl hunting violations were observed. Two additional interagency task force operations were conducted during the waterfowl hunting season, and a total of 448 violations were charged. Service agents filed an additional 121 waterfowl cases for a grand total of 569. State and Federal court prosecutions have netted about $45,000 in fines.

A joint investigation involving the Service, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and the National Park Service resulted in the identification and prosecution of an individual who illegally shot a five-point bull elk inside Rocky Mountain National Park. During interviews of witnesses, a Colorado resident confessed to his involvement in the killing, but directed investigators to his father, a California resident, who had actually killed the elk. Investigators also learned that the informant's brother, also from California, had assisted in the unlawful transport of the animal. The two brothers each paid fines totaling $1,500. The father pleaded guilty to violations of the Lacey Act and was ordered to pay a $2,500 fine. He also had to forfeit all remaining parts of the illegal elk to the U.S. government and had his hunting privileges suspended in Colorado for five years.

Operation Dinosaur was a joint covert operation conducted with the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Agents gained the confidence of an outfitter who was unlawfully using Dinosaur National Monument as his private hunting grounds, illegally guiding hunters from out of state on big game hunts. One hunter from Texas unlawfully killed an elk on monument land. He pleaded guilty to a violation of the Lacey Act and was sentenced to pay a $5,000 fine, $17,500 in restitution to Dinosaur National Monument, and $17,500 in restitution to the Colorado Division of Wildlife's Operation Game Thief program; he must also forfeit all hunting privileges in nine western states for five years. Other nonresident hunters have also settled their cases. One Wisconsin man was sentenced to pay a $5,000 fine and $5,000 restitution, forfeit an all-terrain vehicle, and lose his hunting privileges. A North Carolina man paid a $2,000 fine and $2,000 in restitution. Total restitution (money back to the resource) from the case to date has yielded $19,500 to Operation Game Thief and $22,500 to Dinosaur National Monument.

Illegal take and transportation of big game animals remains an enforcement concern. Dean Biggens/USFWS

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the 1994 Eagle Protection Act convictions of two Crow Indian brothers who had been prosecuted for the illegal take and sale of eagles and their parts.

Special agents from Regions Six and Two presented two 40-hour wildlife enforcement training programs for Native American wildlife enforcement officers in the northwest and southwest. More than 65 Native American wildlife officers, representing over 30 tribes, reservations, and pueblos, participated in the two training programs, which were held in Rapid City, South Dakota, in July 1997 and in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in September 1997. Service special agents also provided 1 1/2 days of wildlife law enforcement instruction during the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society's annual conference in Bozeman, Montana. More than 50 Native American Wildlife Enforcement Officers representing over 30 tribes and reservations attended this training.

Service special agents coordinated a series of inspections of the major oil fields throughout the state of Montana. Over a period of one week, four teams consisting of Bureau of Land Management personnel, Montana Board of Oil and Gas Conservation inspectors, Native American wildlife officers, environmental compliance personnel from tribes, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulatory staff inspected oil pits and ponds for compliance with both state and Federal regulations. Migratory bird mortalities were found at seven of the 130 pits inspected. Charges are pending on some of the oil production companies. One Canadian-based firm paid a $3,200 fine and documented for the court that it spent $1.2 million for cleanup of all of its Montana sites during 1997. A second oil company pleaded guilty to a single violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and was ordered to pay a $3,600 fine and an additional $450 restitution for the nine migratory birds found in the firm's oil pits. An oil pumping company pleaded guilty to killing 10 migratory birds, and will pay about $4,550 to cover a fine, court costs, and restitution.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the 1994 Eagle Protection Act convictions of two Crow Indian brothers who had been prosecuted for the illegal take and sale of eagles and their parts. The ruling is the most recent and significant case concerning the Eagle Protection Act and eagle permits. The court concluded that "on its face, the law and the permit system provide the least restrictive means of conserving eagles and eagle parts for religious purposes."

Operation Squamata, a year-long joint undercover investigation conducted by the Service and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, centered on the ever-growing commercialization of wild-caught reptiles and amphibians. The animals were illegally captured in Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma and subsequently sold to buyers in Kansas and Louisiana, who in turn sold them to customers all over the world. The primary target of the collectors was the box turtle, the Kansas state reptile, which has been listed as an Appendix II species under CITES due to its over-commercialization. At the end of the investigation, two Federal search warrants were served on a major reptile dealer in Louisiana. A state search warrant and arrest

Bald eagle killed by electrocution. USFWS

A two-year joint Federal-state investigation into the alleged poisoning of eagles by a Nebraska cattle rancher led to the discovery of three dead eagles and a coyote on the man's property.

warrant were also served in Kansas. As a result of the investigation, 26 subjects are being prosecuted in state and Federal courts. Three of the defendants were indicted by a Federal grand jury in Kansas on felony Lacey Act charges. These Federal felony wildlife charges, a first in Kansas, demonstrate the commitment of the Service and U.S. Attorney's Office to protecting wildlife from illegal commercialization.

A joint Federal-state task force was assembled in the summer of 1997 to inspect oil production and storage facilities in Kansas for the illegal take of migratory birds. Thousands of exposed oil pits, open-top oil tanks, and oil spills mar the countryside, killing thousands of migratory birds each year. The task force inspections documented dead migratory birds at 55 exposed oil facilities owned by 33 oil producers. These companies will be prosecuted in Federal court for violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; most have already spent thousands of dollars as part of settlements requiring them to clean up their facilities. Dozens of letters were also sent to other oil producers operating exposed oil facilities in the state, advising them of the hazard such facilities represent to migratory birds and of their potential liability under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

A two-year joint Federal-state investigation into the alleged poisoning of eagles by a Nebraska cattle rancher led to the discovery of three dead eagles and a coyote on the man's property. A hired hand told agents that the rancher had instructed him to inject two calf carcasses with liquid Furadan, supposedly to kill coyotes. The poison did kill coyotes, but also resulted in the death of two bald eagles and one golden eagle. The Clark R. Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon, confirmed that all of the animals died of carbamate pesticide poisoning. As part of a separate investigation, the rancher was incarcerated for terrorist threats; his corporation, however, paid a $4,225 fine for the death of the three eagles.

The Division of Law Enforcement continued to serve as the backbone for the easement enforcement program in North and South Dakota, a continuing priority in both states. The potential for easement violations is expected to increase as farmlands come out of a wet cycle. Although much of this work falls outside of the traditional scope of wildlife law enforcement, agents spent a significant amount of time assisting Service wetland management districts and refuges with wetland and easement issues. In addition to reviewing sites for potential violations, providing training, and ensuring compliance with the Service's easement procedures and policies, agents participated in developing new easement wetland mapping procedures and guidelines, and conducted mapping training for Service personnel in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota.

Waterfowl enforcement remained a priority in the Dakotas. Some commercial goose clubs along the Missouri River still feel the need to bait for geese. During the fall of 1997, one goose camp operator was fined $2,750 for taking geese with the aid of bait. A club in South Dakota was fined $1,750 for baiting. Hunting without licenses and over-bagging by commercial guides also continued to be problems. In FY 1997, the Service pursued approximately 40 goose over-bag cases in South Dakota.

Two Native Americans pleaded guilty and were sentenced for illegally killing and transporting a moose that was on a Service waterfowl production area adjoining the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indian Reservation in North Dakota. In lieu of a fine, the U.S. magistrate ordered each subject to pay $800 to the Dakota Zoo's Bullwinkle Fund. The money was to be used to purchase feed for the calf moose that was orphaned as a result of the violation.

A joint investigation with South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks showed that a consortium of South Dakota ranchers who outfit hunters for trophy mule deer hunts on their ranches had been providing nonresident clients with South Dakota resident deer licenses. The illegally killed deer were then

Forfeited and abandoned wildlife property is stored at the National Wildlife Property Repository. USFWS

transported in interstate commerce back to the hunters' respective states. Numerous other hunting violations were also documented. This type of activity is a felony violation of the Lacey Act. To date, the U.S. Attorney's Office is seeking prosecution of approximately 45 defendants for illegal take of trophy mule deer. Some 13 landowners involved in the illegal hunts will also be charged with Lacey Act violations.

Two oil pit inspections in North Dakota revealed dead migratory birds at each location. North Dakota law requires open reserve pits to be closed within three months after drilling stops; all oil must be containerized, and no exposed oil pits are allowed. Federal charges citing violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act were filed against the two oil production companies; one paid a $825 fine and the other paid a $4,400 fine.

The region's joint initiative with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce migratory bird mortalities associated with oil production facilities was a tremendous success in FY 1997. The regional agent/pilot conducted aerial surveys of 42,068 oil and gas wells in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and Kansas, and identified 640 sites that represented a threat to migratory birds. These sites included oil sludge pits, broken flow lines, and surface spills, some of which had damaged wetlands and riparian zones. The joint initiative secured the cleanup of the majority of these sites through established partnerships with Federal, state, and tribal regulatory agencies. The Service documented 105 sites in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. EPA is pursuing numerous Clean Water Act violations as well as approximately 50 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act cases and several Oil Pollution Act cases. EPA provided funds to operate the aircraft plus an additional $32,000 for Service operations. As a result of the success of this initiative, EPA is requesting that it be expanded to a national program.

The National Eagle Repository saw a significant increase in the number of eagles received from across the country, thanks to successful outreach efforts that targeted state game departments, other Federal agencies, federally licensed bird rehabilitators, and the public. In order to obtain more eagles for distribution to Native Americans, the repository is also providing shipping boxes and pre-paid mailing labels for shipping eagles to the facility. In FY 1997, the repository received 1,160 whole eagles and 156 eagle parts (1,316 shipments) and filled 1,416 orders—980 for whole eagles, 190 for eagle feathers and parts, and 246 for miscellaneous raptors.

The National Wildlife Property Repository has been working with the American Zoological Association, World Wildlife Fund, National Wildlife Federation, and the Service's National Conservation Training Center to revise the "Suitcase for Survival" program. In FY 1997, the repository received 380 shipments of seized or forfeited wildlife property containing 31,321 inventoried items. Some 206 shipments (representing a total of 4,000 items) were sent out for use by appropriate organizations.

A group of Cub Scouts visit the processing room at the National Eagle Repository. USFWS

Agents continued to investigate the shooting of seven grizzly bears along one stretch of beach within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Five of the bears had only their gallbladders removed.

Region Seven

Region Seven consists of the state of Alaska—a state that contains species found nowhere else in the United States as well as a variety of ecosystems. Eleven special agents were responsible for enforcing Federal wildlife laws in Alaska in FY 1997. The region has two wildlife inspectors who conduct inspections at the non-designated port of entry in Anchorage.

Lacey Act investigations involving big game animals taken in violation of state and Federal law continued to stretch the resources of Region Seven special agents. Priority is given to commercial operations, especially those occurring on national wildlife refuges.

In FY 1997, investigations included that of a Talkeetna hunting guide whose clients illegally killed bear, caribou, and moose on state and Federal lands over a period of several years. During the investigation, agents discovered that the guide was in the process of transferring his assets to South America. Suspecting that he was preparing to flee the country to avoid prosecution, agents arrested the guide. After a five-day trial, the man was found guilty of eight felonies, sentenced to 26 months in prison, and ordered to forfeit an airplane he used in his operation.

A Northpole hunting guide and his two Utah clients all pleaded guilty to Lacey Act charges related to the taking of three grizzly bears, one of which was a cub. Another Alaskan guide paid a $2,500 fine for violating the Lacey Act, and his client paid a $10,000 fine in the Yukon for illegally killing a Fannen sheep on the wrong side of the border. The hunter and an assistant guide who were lawfully hunting in the United States sneaked across the border into Canada where they shot the rare sheep. A Canadian stake-out team secretly videotaped the illegal hunt and turned the tape over to Service agents.

A joint state-Federal case involving the illegal take of moose and grizzly bears in the Brooks Range was settled, with the hunting guide agreeing to a $5,500 fine and a 70-day suspended jail sentence. Three hunting clients and an assistant guide agreed to pay fines totaling $12,750 and donate another $900 to a Wildlife Safeguard program. They forfeited three moose, one rifle, and a bontebuk that had been illegally imported from Africa.

Grizzly bears continue to be killed for their gallbladders.
Larry Aumiller/USFWS

Agents investigated a group of seven hunters from the village of Diomede, which is located on an island in the Bering Sea along the Russian border.

Wasteful take of walrus is prohibited under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. USFWS

Walrus heads seized on Little Diomede. USFWS

A Maine resident became a fugitive when he fled the state after Federal charges were filed against him for illegally taking sheep, moose, grizzly bear, and deer. Agents tracked the man to Tucson, Arizona, and then on to Washington State; he was arrested at the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge where he was working as a volunteer. The suspect pleaded guilty to three Lacey Act misdemeanors and agreed to a $10,000 fine and revocation of his hunting privileges in the United States for five years. The subject is also prohibited from importing wildlife for five years.

Agents continued to investigate the shooting of seven grizzly bears along one stretch of beach within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Five of the bears had only their gallbladders removed. Agents suspect the other two were also killed for their galls, but the carcasses were badly decomposed and no determination could be made. A suspect has been identified.

In a new twist to Alaska's continuing controversy over subsistence rights, agents successfully prosecuted a Galena man for removing 176 trees from the Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge. The man claimed a subsistence right to the trees, but he was selling them to a gold mine operator.

Agents investigated a group of seven hunters from the village of Diomede, which is located on an island in the Bering Sea along the Russian border. The hunters returned to the village from a walrus hunting trip with 33 walrus heads in their boat and far less meat and other parts than required by the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Service policy. Five of the hunters had been charged previously with wasteful take of walrus and served jail sentences. Charges under the Marine Mammal Protection Act for wasteful take of walrus are anticipated.

The largest Archaeological Resource Protection Act case in Alaska history concluded with a Washington man paying a $500 fine and forfeiting 155 individual artifacts to the government. The subject illegally collected the artifacts on the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge while he was working for a contractor on Shemya, an island in the Aleutian chain. Agents found that some of the archaeological sites had been excavated with a backhoe. Service archaeologists said that the artifacts, which included body decorations, stone spears, and bone fishhooks, were used by Aleutian Natives hundreds or even thousands of years ago.

An Oregon man pleaded guilty to one felony Lacey Act count for purchasing Alaskan polar bear hides, which he cut into small strips and sold nationally as fly-tying material. The man explained to a Service undercover agent that he concealed his illegal activity by claiming the polar bear fur came from old clothing trimmed with fur—a source that would be exempt from the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

In August, a Fairbanks agent accompanied two refuge managers from Alaska to the Russian Far East where they met with Russian wildlife managers and exchanged information about wildlife management and law enforcement.

Special Agent John Rayfield was nominated for the Valor Award for his heroic attempt to rescue the pilot of a float plane that crashed and flipped upside down at Minto Flats, a popular duck hunting area north of Fairbanks. Rayfield, who had been working on duck hunting enforcement in the area, sped to the crash scene by boat and made repeated attempts to free the unconscious pilot from the wreckage until cold and exhaustion prevented further effort. The pilot did not survive the crash.

The Division of Law Enforcement's Branch of Special Operations, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is an operational unit that uses sophisticated methods to conduct complex, often covert investigations that are both national and international in scope.

Region Nine

Branch of Special Operations

The Division of Law Enforcement's Branch of Special Operations, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is an operational unit that uses sophisticated methods to conduct complex, often covert investigations that are both national and international in scope. In FY 1997, the Branch employed seven special agents stationed at various locations throughout the country.

The Branch routinely targets the large-scale illegal commercialization of endangered and protected wildlife, an investigative focus that represents a law enforcement priority for the Service. In recent years, for example, investigations conducted by the Branch of Special Operations have successfully infiltrated the wild bird and exotic reptile trades with significant results.

On August 14, 1997, a Miami wildlife dealer was sentenced in Federal court to one year and one day confinement for conspiring to smuggle African grey parrots into the United States, bringing to a close the last prosecution undertaken as a result of Operation Renegade—a multiyear undercover investigation conducted by the Branch of Special Operations. The defendant, whose company was the largest U.S. importer of African grey parrots from 1988 to 1990, pleaded guilty to filing false import documents in violation of the Lacey Act and to smuggling charges under 18 U.S.C. 545. He was also ordered to pay fines and restitution totaling $300,000, the largest financial penalty ever assessed in a Federal wildlife smuggling case.

During its heyday, the subject's company imported approximately 24 percent of all African grey parrots coming into the United States. Between February 1988 and August 1991, the defendant conspired to smuggle over 4,000 "Congo" African grey parrots that had been illegally taken in Zaire, where the trade is banned, into the United States via Senegal. False CITES permits were obtained, stating that the birds came from Guinea or the Ivory Coast, countries where the birds do not occur in the wild.

Earlier in the fiscal year, a Federal court in Chicago sentenced an internationally recognized ornithological expert and outspoken protector of exotic birds to nearly seven years imprisonment for his role in directing an international parrot smuggling conspiracy and related income tax violations. The subject, another target of Operation Renegade, was also fined $100,000 and ordered to perform 200 hours of community service during a three-year supervised release program that will follow the prison term. He had pleaded guilty to conspiring to smuggle more than $1.3 million worth of endangered and protected wild birds into the United States. The smuggled birds included substantial numbers of rare hyacinth macaws, a species found primarily in Brazil.

Operation Renegade successfully shut down a significant portion of the illegal commercial trade in live parrots and macaws and their eggs. As a result of this investigation, 38 defendants were convicted; 33 of these individuals received sentences totaling over 47 years in prison and over $500,000 in fines and restitution.

Two of the six individuals who were indicted by a Federal grand jury in August 1996 for a multiyear international conspiracy to smuggle hundreds of rare and endangered snakes and tortoises from Madagascar into the United States were brought to justice during FY 1997. In January 1997, a German national was sentenced to serve 46 months in jail and pay a $10,000 fine for his role in the reptile smuggling operation. A South African citizen who worked as a courier for the ring and cooperated with investigators received three years probation and six months in a community corrections facility. A Canadian citizen and three other German nationals were also named in the August 1996 indictment.

Operation Chameleon, the Branch of Special Operations' ongoing investigation of the illegal reptile trade, produced a second major indictment in October 1997.

Operation Chameleon, the Branch of Special Operations' ongoing investigation of the illegal reptile trade, produced a second major indictment in October 1997. A Federal grand jury in Orlando, Florida, charged a well-known Florida reptile dealer and five of his U.S. and international associates with wildlife smuggling, conspiracy, and money laundering. Two German nationals included in this indictment are also wanted under the August 1996 indictment.

In a second international reptile smuggling investigation, code-named The Netherlands Connection, the Branch of Special Operations and attorneys from the U.S. Department of Justice Wildlife and Marine Resources Section assisted law enforcement officials in The Netherlands. Through an international treaty between the United States and that country, investigative information was exchanged that supported the arrest of four international wildlife dealers in The Netherlands. In January 1997, special agents in Regions Two, Four, and Five served six search warrants and conducted multiple interviews timed to coincide with simultaneous searches and interviews in The Netherlands and Indonesia. This joint Dutch and U.S. investigation highlighted the prolific, ongoing illegal trade in reptiles and amphibians from Indonesia to Europe and the United States.

Smuggling rings investigated during Operation Chameleon targeted radiated tortoises and other protected species. Ernest Mayer/USFWS

The Control of International Trade in Wildlife

The Service relies on the Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act as the primary domestic legislation to control wildlife imports and exports. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is the major international agreement for the control of trade in wildlife and plants. In the United States, CITES is implemented through the Endangered Species Act.

The Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act give responsibility to the Service, through the U.S. Department of the Interior, for the control of imported and exported fish and wildlife. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has the primary responsibility for controlling the importation and exportation of plants.

The Service has a broad range of programs to enforce the provisions of the Endangered Species Act, the Lacey Act, and CITES involving the importation and exportation of wildlife. These include the designation of specific ports of entry for wildlife, the staffing of these ports with wildlife inspectors to monitor wildlife shipments, the licensing of commercial wildlife importers and exporters, the development of a national computer system to analyze importation and exportation data, the use of international intelligence to monitor wildlife trade, and cooperation with other Federal agencies and other countries committed to halting the illegal wildlife trade.

Since the early 1970s, the Service has designated certain ports of entry for the importation and the exportation of wildlife. The concept of designated ports provides a funneling mechanism that consolidates wildlife shipments at a few specific locations to provide efficient service and to reduce the cost to the public. Originally the Service designated eight ports of entry for wildlife shipments: New York, Miami, New Orleans, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and Honolulu. In 1981, in response to public request, the Service added Dallas-Fort Worth; in 1990, Portland, Oregon; in 1992, Baltimore, Maryland; in 1994, Boston, Massachusetts; and in 1996, Atlanta, Georgia. In addition to these 13 designated ports, certain ports along the Canadian and Mexican borders have been established for the importation and exportation of wildlife between the United States and those countries.

In implementing the system of designated ports, the Service attempted to select ports based upon total cargo, wildlife traffic, and geographical diversity. The agency, however, recognized that under certain circumstances, it would be necessary to allow importers to use other ports for scientific purposes, to alleviate economic hardship, or minimize deterioration or loss. For these reasons, the Service issues exception to designated port permits. Except in exigent circumstances, the Service will not issue an exception to designated port permit unless there is sufficient staff to adequately handle the shipments without disrupting other law enforcement activities. Those who import or export wildlife under the authority of a non-designated port permit are required to reimburse the Service for all costs of inspecting and clearing each shipment.

In 1975, the Service assigned the first wildlife inspectors to designated ports to inspect and clear importations and exportations of wildlife. Before that time, special agents handled all import and export clearance duties in addition to their other responsibilities. By creating a staff of wildlife inspectors, the Service developed full-time, specialized positions to address a specific need.

The Service originally staffed the designated ports with 32 wildlife inspectors. Subsequently, four more inspectors were added at non-designated and border ports that were experiencing significant wildlife traffic. In 1985, as a result of a Congressional budget initiative, the Service increased the staff from 36 to 56 inspectors. The Service periodically reviews the distribution of wildlife inspectors to determine whether

Wildlife inspectors spend 100 percent of their time working in the area of import-export control.

additional inspectors are needed and whether the number at each port is adequate. As of September 1997, the number of authorized wildlife inspector positions had increased to 92.

In addition to its staff of wildlife inspectors, the Service employs a force of about 230 special agents who are responsible for investigating suspected violations of Federal wildlife laws. An important part of the duties of these criminal investigators is to enforce the provisions of the Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act as they pertain to the importation and exportation of wildlife and wildlife products. Service special agents use the full range of investigative techniques to detect and apprehend violators of laws and regulations restricting international wildlife trade.

Wildlife inspectors spend 100 percent of their time working in the area of import-export control. Their specific duties include the examination of document packages that accompany shipments, the physical inspection of the contents of shipments, the proper handling of seized property, and the completion of administrative duties associated with the inspection, clearance, or seizure of wildlife imports and exports.

Wildlife inspectors attend an initial four-week basic training course at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia, and 24 hours of in-service training annually. They also receive on-the-job training at the port of entry to which they are assigned.

Live reptile shipments require special handling by inspectors. USFWS

Although special agents may become involved with the actual inspection and clearance of wildlife shipments, their primary responsibility is the investigation of known or suspected violations of Federal wildlife laws. In this capacity, special agents assume responsibility for a wildlife shipment once it has been determined that a violation may have occurred.

In 1983, the Service activated its Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS), a national computer network designed to assist in processing and retrieving law enforcement information. In addition to investigative and administrative data, the Service maintains information about wildlife imports and exports in LEMIS.

The Service also maintains an intelligence unit in the Washington Office. One of the primary responsibilities of this staff is to monitor international wildlife trade patterns to determine compliance with foreign law and whether such trade is adversely affecting species or populations. Information developed by this intelligence unit is used in several ways. If data indicate that specific violations have occurred, an investigation is opened. In other cases, the unit may continue to monitor a suspected problem and may notify other countries of its findings.

When the intelligence unit learns that a particular country has laws restricting the export or trade in certain species of wildlife, the Service publishes these findings in the *Federal Register* in the form of a Notice of Information, notifying the public of the restrictions and of the actions that the Service intends to take to assist in the enforcement of such restrictions under the Lacey Act. A copy of the notice is mailed to each importer holding an import-export license and is also provided to recognized wildlife trade groups for dissemination.

On occasion, intelligence has indicated such flagrant disregard for both CITES and the laws of other countries on the part of a particular nation that the Service has published a Notice of Information announcing a total ban on the importation of wildlife from that country. Such bans have been imposed on the Philippines for failure to comply with CITES requirements concerning notification of changes in the management authority, and on Singapore for failing to comply with the principles of CITES and respect the wildlife laws of other nations. Both bans were lifted when the respective problems were resolved.

Service wildlife inspectors put a priority on shipments of live animals. USFWS

In fulfilling its mission of restricting illegal wildlife trade, the Service relies upon the cooperation of other Federal agencies. The U.S. Customs Service is the primary agency responsible for inspection and clearance of all goods imported into the United States. In this capacity, Customs is the first line of defense against illegal wildlife shipments. Before it will clear a shipment at designated ports, Customs refers each wildlife shipment to Service wildlife inspectors for inspection and clearance. At ports that lack Service officers, Customs inspectors either clear wildlife shipments directly or take other appropriate action. Customs inspectors who have questions about shipments routinely contact the nearest Service officer for guidance. In addition, the Service provides local training for Customs inspectors as well as participating in the training that Customs provides at FLETC.

It is often necessary for the Service to communicate with foreign governments to coordinate the enforcement of CITES and Lacey Act violations predicated on foreign wildlife laws. While the Service has the authority to communicate directly with other CITES management authorities, it may become necessary to route communications through official diplomatic channels. In these circumstances, the Department of State has been extremely cooperative. The State Department was particularly helpful and supportive during negotiations with Singapore on the ban on wildlife trade.

The Department of Justice is closely involved with Service efforts to interdict illegal wildlife importations and exportations. Special agents work closely with U.S. Attorneys' Offices on individual cases. Attorneys from the Wildlife and Marine Resources Section of the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice provide legal support to the Service on national issues as well as assisting in prosecuting cases at the field level.

In addition to Customs, the State Department, and the Department of Justice, the Service works closely with other Federal agencies that have jurisdiction at ports of entry. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the Department of Agriculture requires that all birds and certain mammals be quarantined prior to entering into the United States. Service officers must coordinate inspections of these shipments with Agriculture to ensure that wildlife laws as well as quarantine laws are properly enforced and that protection goals are being achieved.

The Service also coordinates its inspection activities with several other agencies, including the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Coast Guard.

Through CITES, the Service has extended its international cooperation throughout the world. In the past few years, the Service has participated in several international conferences on CITES enforcement and has conducted training in enforcement for many of the party countries. In addition, the Service has maintained a close relationship with Canada and Mexico and has provided both training and support to those nations in the area of wildlife law enforcement.

Considering the size of its law enforcement force, the Service is making important strides in controlling illegal wildlife imports and exports. However, serious problems still exist. The total estimated number of wildlife shipments has risen from around 45,000 (with a declared value of $500 million) in 1980 to around 85,000 (with a declared value of over $1 billion) in 1997, a significant increase.

Millions of containerized shipments enter the United States annually. The Service is able to inspect only a minute percentage of these shipments. Even this small sample has shown that containers are a major smuggling route for illegal wildlife products. For example, the Service seized over $500,000 in oriental medicinal products at the port of Newark, New Jersey, alone. These medicinal products included pills made from the horns of rhinos, an endangered species.

The Service works closely with other Federal agencies and with foreign governments to enforce both domestic laws and international treaties restricting wildlife trade.

A serious problem also exists with respect to the identification of wildlife products. While the Service has the capability to identify whole animals and products containing large pieces of wildlife, such as boots, purses, and fur garments, it is often impossible to identify small items such as watchbands and trim. Even more difficult is the identification of products such as cosmetics and oriental medicines that are chemical compounds composed in part of wildlife. Unless the wildlife is declared as an ingredient on the packaging, the Service is often hard-pressed to identify the species involved.

The Service is doing a good job of controlling wildlife imports and exports within the constraints of staff and funding. Most wildlife shipments are channeled through a few designated ports of entry where they are inspected and cleared by a well-trained staff of Wildlife Inspectors. Suspected violations are referred to an equally well-trained staff of Special Agents for investigation. The Service maintains an intelligence staff to monitor international trade in wildlife and to provide information to appropriate authorities when action is necessary. Based upon this intelligence, the Service has initiated investigations, notified other countries of potential problems, and even imposed complete bans on wildlife imports from certain countries. The Service works closely with other Federal agencies and with foreign governments to enforce both domestic laws and international treaties restricting wildlife trade.

But many challenges remain. The percentage of containerized shipments inspected remains relatively small. Also, identification of wildlife products is difficult—a problem that could have a significant impact on the future success of the Service's program.

Despite these challenges, the Service believes that it has a sound program for controlling the importation and exportation of wildlife and wildlife products. No system of controls is foolproof; however, wildlife inspections at the ports, diligent investigation by special agents of suspected violations, and aggressive prosecutions by the Department of Justice are helping to create an effective deterrent to future crimes.

Location of Wildlife Inspectors

Designated Ports
Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas; Honolulu, Hawaii; Los Angeles, California; Miami, Florida; New York, New York; New Orleans, Louisiana; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington.

Border, Non-designated, and Special Ports
Agana, Guam; Anchorage, Alaska; Blaine, Washington; Brownsville, Texas; Buffalo, New York; Denver (Golden), Colorado; Detroit (Ann Arbor), Michigan; El Paso, Texas; Houston, Texas; Laredo, Texas; Nogales, Arizona; Pembina, North Dakota; San Diego, California; San Juan, Puerto Rico; St. Paul, Minnesota; Tampa, Florida.

The Wildlife Task Force, established in 1995, continued to play a major role in the detection of wildlife violations in the greater Los Angeles area.

Highlights of the Inspection Program

During FY 1997, the Service's wildlife inspectors processed more than 85,000 declared shipments of wildlife and wildlife products worth more than $1 billion. The Nation's busiest ports of entry for the wildlife trade were New York/Newark, where more than 17,000 shipments entered or left the country, followed by Los Angeles (15,449 shipments) and Miami (10,025 shipments).

In Los Angeles, three vacant wildlife inspector positions were filled early in the fiscal year, bringing the number of full-time inspectors up to 13. A wildlife inspector/student trainee was added to the staff for part of the fiscal year. The overall inspection rate for wildlife shipments increased slightly, and the regulatory increase in user fees resulted in a dramatic rise in collections, from $675,900 in FY 1996 to $1,004,048 in FY 1997.

Endangered species violations (including CITES) accounted for 84 percent of the shipments refused clearance at the Port of Los Angeles in FY 1997. Shipments were also stopped for violations of the Lacey Act (11 percent), Marine Mammal Protection Act (3 percent), and Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1 percent). Passenger baggage again provided a large part of the caseload due to a greater Service presence at the terminals.

The Wildlife Task Force, established in 1995, continued to play a major role in the detection of wildlife violations in the greater Los Angeles area. Task force cross-training of personnel from Customs, Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, and other organizations produced noticeable results in passenger, cargo, and mail interceptions. As a result of task force efforts, special enforcement operations at U.S. Customs mail facilities, passenger terminals, and air and sea cargo facilities resulted in the interception of a number of illegal wildlife shipments, leading to additional investigation and identification of subjects involved in illegal wildlife trade in the greater Los Angeles area. The Wildlife Task Force will continue joint agency efforts in the future, with projects already scheduled for FY 1998.

Wildlife inspectors in Los Angeles conducted or participated in 52 outreach events during FY 1997. As in the past, these efforts focused on such major events as the Los Angeles Eco Expo, the Americas Family Pet Show, and the Marine Aquarium Conference of North America. The Port of Los Angeles was also represented at a trilateral seminar on the bird trade, which was held in Mexico. Numerous school and wildlife society presentations were conducted and continue to be in popular demand. More than 250,000 people were introduced to the Service and the wildlife trade through these outreach events.

The Port of San Francisco was staffed by three wildlife inspectors who examined cargo and personal baggage at three international airports, two mail facilities, and an extensive ocean cargo and trucking complex. The greatest number of seizures involved Asian medicinals containing endangered wildlife or species listed on Appendix II of CITES. Products manufactured from sea turtles and elephants represented the next highest number of seizures.

Wildlife inspectors in San Francisco remained active participants in the local multiagency Herbal Medicinal Task Force under the direction of the U.S. Attorney's Office. Wildlife inspectors and special agents assisted by Mason, a specially trained wildlife detection dog, conducted an intensive examination of foreign mail shipments at the Oakland Mail Facility. This cooperative blitz, which also involved inspectors and agents from Customs, the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Agriculture, and the California Department of Public Health, intercepted several illegal importations, including four packages that contained 79 grams of bear gallbladder bile products worth some $39,000 on the black market.

The year also saw continued illegal trade in products made from endangered sea turtles and frequent seizures of Asian medicinals that allegedly contain the parts of endangered animals.

Four wildlife inspectors were stationed at the designated port of Honolulu, Hawaii. Because of the large international tourist trade, wildlife inspectors continued to provide coverage and assist Customs personnel at the foreign arrivals' section of Honolulu International Airport. Inspection of mail parcels at the U.S. Customs mail facility were conducted daily. Inspectors issued some 226 CITES re-export certificates (primarily for reptilian leather goods), a decrease from the FY 1996 total of 370.

The wildlife inspection staff in Hawaii continued an aggressive outreach program that included participation in Earth Day activities with other agencies, periodic training of U.S. Customs Service personnel, and biweekly replenishment of literature at the wildlife display in the Honolulu International Airport.

Inspection operations at the designated port of Seattle (SEATAC) were handled by two wildlife inspectors. Inspection offices were maintained at the freight transiplex and at the international passenger arrival satellite. Ship container cargo arrivals at both the Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma were also covered.

Items seized by wildlife inspectors in Seattle included 75 sea turtle bracelets that had been hidden in an ocean cargo shipment. The skins and horns of several exotic species listed under CITES were seized when a Texas hunting outfitter attempted to export them to Denmark without permits. The animals had been killed on a ranch in Texas by a Danish national. A $1,500 civil penalty was assessed, and the items were forfeited. A Washington State resident was fined $500 after pleading guilty to illegally importing walrus parts from the former Soviet Union. The illegal wildlife was forfeited.

Port of Portland wildlife inspectors monitored wildlife imports and exports at the Portland International Airport, the U.S. Mail Registry, ocean cargo areas at Portland, and at the associated port of entry at Longview, Washington. The port was staffed by two inspectors during the reporting period. Wildlife imports remained relatively low during the year. Approximately 90 percent of all wildlife shipments were commercial.

Educational outreach remained a priority of the Portland staff. Wildlife inspectors participated in the Oregon Historical Society's annual "Wintering-In Festival" on Sauvie Island (approximately 9,000 attendees); the Mount Hood Regional Cooperative Consortium's "Expanding Your Horizons" conference and workshop for young women (approximately 3,000 attendees); the Washington Park Metropolitan Zoo's annual Roar Fair; the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry's annual Reptile and Amphibian Show; and the annual Safari Club International Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Port of Agana, Guam, is classified as a "special port" under Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 14.19(c). During FY 1997, the port was staffed by one wildlife inspector and one special agent. Guam Customs and Agriculture Quarantine officers continued to support Service officers in the Guam foreign arrivals area. Service staff also conducted an inspection program at the non-designated port of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Of significance to this inspection program is the incidence of illegality discovered while working with other cooperating agencies. In Saipan, over 50 percent of documented wildlife shipments were seized or resulted in a follow-up investigation.

The illegal importation of endangered fruit bats for human consumption continued to be encountered in both Guam and the CNMI; nine investigations involving such importations were conducted during FY 1997. The year also saw continued illegal trade in products made from endangered sea turtles and frequent seizures of Asian medicinals that allegedly contain the parts of endangered animals. During FY 1997, the

As in years past, a major focus for Service outreach on the Mexican border was training for other inspection agencies such as Customs, Department of Agriculture, Immigration and Naturalization, and Border Patrol.

Service conducted 104 investigations involving sea turtles and sea turtle products and 100 involving Asian medicinals in Guam and Saipan.

Three wildlife inspectors stationed at San Diego, California, monitored wildlife imports and exports at five ports of entry on the U.S. border with Mexico. These ports of entry include: San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, Tecate, Calexico, and Andrade, California. Violations involving the Endangered Species Act (including CITES) continued to represent a growing percentage of all wildlife violations detected. These offenses accounted for 32 percent of all violations detected in FY 1995, 68 percent in FY 1996, and 74 percent in FY 1997.

FY 1997 border activity included a significant increase in CITES violations involving small commercial shipments of reptile boots. Inspectors noticed, however, that cases involving sea turtle products have decreased significantly. Much of this decrease may be attributed to increased training and enforcement activity on the part of Mexican wildlife officials.

As in years past, a major focus for Service utreach on the Mexican border was training for other inspection agencies such as Customs, Department of Agriculture, Immigration and Naturalization, and Border Patrol. Of the 41 outreach events conducted in FY 1997, 24 provided training for inspectors employed by other agencies. School and public education programs also continued; inspectors participated in the San Diego Earth Day celebration, the Mira Mar Air Show, and the San Diego Science Educators Convention, all major events attracting more than 100,000 people. The office also started a training effort with Mexico's PROFEPA wildlife inspectors in the adjacent Mexican ports of entry.

The Port of Blaine, Washington, was staffed by a single wildlife inspector who monitored wildlife shipments along the Canadian border in Washington and Idaho. Inspection activities remain varied and busy, with user fee collections almost doubling from the previous fiscal year. The inspector conducted several training classes for other Federal inspection agencies at Blaine and other border ports. Blaine is a particularly busy commercial truck border crossing, with over 440,000 trucks cleared in FY 1997.

The Service's wildlife inspection program in Chicago enforced international and domestic laws that regulate U.S. trade in wildlife and wildlife products at the Nation's fourth busiest port of entry for these goods. In 1997, the efforts of wildlife inspectors stationed at O'Hare International Airport resulted in the issuance of more that $20,000 in Violation Notices to persons illegally importing and exporting wildlife and wildlife products.

The Chicago inspection staff conducted successful outreach efforts to educate the public about the wildlife trade. Three recent television shows featured the activities of the wildlife inspection program in Chicago. Service inspectors appeared in the productions "Wild about Animals" and "Wild Chicago" to discuss the legal aspects of importing protected species of tarantulas. Both programs were filmed at the Service Import/Export Office in the International Terminal at O'Hare. For the past year, live CITES Appendix II tarantulas have been on display at the Chicago Academy of Sciences Children's Museum, the Field Museum of Natural History, and the Lincoln Park Zoo. Through such exhibits, the public learns about regulations and laws that control wildlife trade and protect the world's wildlife resources.

The City of Chicago requested the assistance of Service wildlife inspectors in the design of "Kids on the Fly"—a new interactive entertainment and educational display at O'Hare International Airport. Mounted wildlife specimens supplied by the Service were incorporated into a playground setting as part of the "Cargo Treasure Hunt" game, which exposes traveling families to the activities of a normal working day at the world's busiest airport.

Following the example of the U.S. Marshals Service, which regularly auctions off seized and forfeited property, Service officers in Anchorage arranged to sell 2,000 pounds of reindeer antlers at auction.

In FY 1997, wildlife inspectors at the new designated port of Atlanta cleared 1,075 wildlife declarations, collected $43,810 in user fees, and processed over 400 license applications, which produced $40,835 in fees.

Of the more than 11,000 wildlife shipments coming through the Port of Miami, 88 percent contained live animals; 40 percent of these shipments were exports leaving the country. Miami is the main port of entry in the United States for venomous reptiles. User fees collected in Miami totaled $606,042.

The wildlife inspector stationed in Tampa, Florida, cleared 1,842 wildlife declarations and collected $108,095 in user fees. In New Orleans, the wildlife inspector handled the export of approximately 6 million live red-eared slider turtles destined for the pet trade in Asia and Europe. Over 200,000 alligator skins and 55,000 pounds of alligator meat were exported, and 90,000 live iguanas and 7 million feathered masks were imported. The New Orleans inspection program collected $51,995 in user fees. In Puerto Rico, the Service inspection operation collected $6,585 in user fees.

Wildlife inspectors at the Valley Stream, New York, law enforcement office staffed an endangered species booth at the Long Island Pet Expo at the Nassau Coliseum. Displayed items included various types of wildlife that are routinely inspected, as well as confiscated articles. The event, which was attended by more than 150,000 people, presented an excellent outreach opportunity. Public interest in the Service exhibit was outstanding. The show received extensive media coverage, and Service officers were interviewed by a local cable company.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Law Enforcement and other public and private sector members of Baltimore's port community received Vice President Gore's prestigious Hammer Award in April 1997. The Hammer Award recognizes government organizations that have cut red tape and eliminated government waste. Baltimore's award was a first in the Nation because the nomination came from the private sector and acknowledged collaborative public and private sector teamwork. Senior Resident Agent Andrea Ward and Wildlife Inspector Rick Potvin, who accepted the award for the Service, also received individual recognition as working members of the team. John Kamensky, director, National Performance Review, Office of the Vice President, presented the awards with the assistance of members of the Maryland congressional delegation.

Following the example of the U.S. Marshals Service, which regularly auctions off seized and forfeited property, Service officers in Anchorage arranged to sell 2,000 pounds of reindeer antlers at auction. The antler shipment, which had originated in Russia and was bound for Los Angeles, was seized by Region Seven wildlife inspectors at the Anchorage International Airport when bear gallbladders were found concealed among the antlers. Two Russians accompanying the cargo fled to Russia, abandoning the entire shipment. The auction, which brought Oriental medicinal dealers from as far away as California, netted more the $57,000. The proceeds, minus a 10-percent fee paid to the auction company and reimbursement of Service storage expenses, went into the Lacey Act Reward Fund.

Wildlife inspectors at Anchorage International Airport checked more than 70 hunters traveling to Russia in the spring to hunt Russian brown bear. The inspectors worked closely with U.S. outfitters and booking companies that arranged the hunts, meeting with hunters to explain regulations and answer questions before they left for Russia. When the hunters returned, their trophies and CITES permits were expeditiously inspected and cleared. Many hunters praised the professionalism of the inspectors and expressed appreciation for the Service's proactive efforts to assist them with what many consider a complex and confusing process.

FY 1996-97 WILDLIFE INSPECTION ACTIVITY

Port of Entry	FY 1996* No. of Shipments	FY 1997** No. of Shipments
DESIGNATED PORTS		
HONOLULU, HI	3,501	3,251
LOS ANGELES, CA	16,706	15,449
SEATTLE, WA	2,608	2,597
SAN FRANCISCO, CA	2,372	3,495
PORTLAND, OR	880	758
DALLAS/FORT WORTH, TX	2,748	2,913
CHICAGO, IL	4,016	4,223
MIAMI, FL	10,377	10,025
NEW ORLEANS, LA	975	775
BALTIMORE, MD	1,275	2,395
NEW YORK, NY / NEWARK, NJ	16,726	17,298
BOSTON, MA	868	707
ATLANTA, GA	356	1,098
SUBTOTAL	63,408	64,974
NON-DESIGNATED PORTS		
SAN DIEGO, CA	422	453
BLAINE, WA	1,252	474
AGANA, GU	611	648
BROWNSVILLE, TX	247	276
EL PASO, TX	917	850
HOUSTON, TX	758	656
LAREDO, TX	429	225
NOGALES, AZ	568	277
DETROIT, MI	2,810	947
ST. PAUL, MN	703	739
TAMPA, FL	905	1,776
SAN JUAN, PR	141	129
BUFFALO, NY	986	1,164
GOLDEN, CO	296	377
PEMBINA, ND	1,518	1,227
ANCHORAGE, AK	3,368	3,105
SUBTOTAL	15,986	12,388
OTHERS***	8,509	6,808
TOTAL	87,848	85,195

* As of 1/9/98

** As of 6/16/98

*** Includes non-staffed ports

In September 1988, the Service opened the 23,000-square-foot National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon. The facility was renamed the Clark R. Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in FY 1991. The primary mission of the Laboratory is to make species-specific identification of wildlife parts and products seized as evidence, much like a police crime laboratory, and to match suspect, victim, and crime scene together through the examination and comparison of physical evidence. Because there are few wildlife forensic techniques available to make species-specific identifications, the Laboratory staff conducts extensive research to develop new identification methods. The primary user groups for the Laboratory are Service special agents and wildlife inspectors, other Federal agencies, state wildlife agencies, and the signatory countries to the CITES treaty.

Since opening for business in 1988, the Laboratory has received over 4,500 cases. Of these cases approximately 70 percent were submitted from Federal agencies, 25 percent from state agencies, and five percent from international agencies. There has been a steady increase in casework submissions each year since the Laboratory opened. Each case may represent one or multiple examination requests; each request represents a commitment on the part of the Laboratory to provide expert witness testimony in a Federal, state, or international court of law.

In addition to casework and research, Laboratory personnel also provide valuable training to Service law enforcement officers and to law enforcement personnel from other U.S. agencies and other countries. The staff also works with such groups as the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors and supports the wildlife subgroup of Interpol.

Laboratory staff include experts in such fields of forensic science as criminalistics, morphology, serology, and pathology. Much of their work involves developing analytical techniques and applying them to wildlife cases. Technical support professionals also make key contributions.

FY 1997 Accomplishments

The National Fish and Wildlife Forensic Laboratory became accredited by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLAD). Only half of the Nation's crime labs have been successful in meeting the rigorous requirements established by ASCLAD.

In FY 1997, the Laboratory handled 481 cases from Federal agencies, 239 from state agencies, and 35 from organizations in other countries. Service forensic scientists worked on a total of 755 cases.

Laboratory staff traveled to India for the Service's Office of International Affairs to assist in a collaborative project with the Wildlife Institute of India. Service scientists served as technical advisers for the establishment of a wildlife forensic lab.

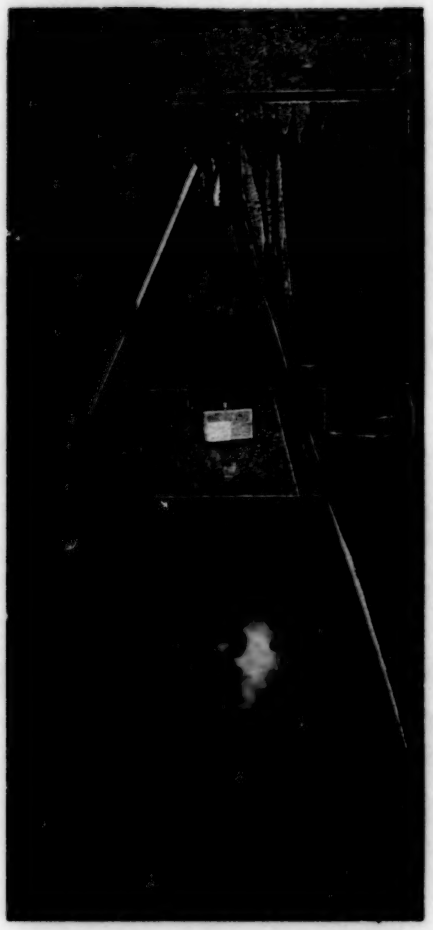
The Laboratory provided training for visiting wildlife forensic scientists from Canada, Italy, Taiwan, and Singapore on state-of-the-art methods and techniques. Lab scientists also conducted training sessions for the Special Agent In-Service training, Wildlife Inspector Basic training, and Wildlife Inspector In-Service training.

Laboratory staff responded to field crime scene work in New Mexico (identification of birds used in Native American artifacts) and in California (identification of species of oiled bird carcasses).

Scientists developed new capabilities for processing and recovering latent print evidence.

The Laboratory worked on 12 cases in which the results identified marine mammal parts or products.

The Laboratory's web site was redesigned to be more user friendly, and a web-based lab intranet was established.



Necropsy of a grizzly bear. USFWS

Improvements in the area of technical support include establishment of an information security system to control access to the Laboratory's computer network and the purchase and installation of a new information management system that tracks evidence and casework using bar code labels.

A case statistics systems was designed using a web-based application. This application continues to run on the Laboratory's intranet; it was the first database application in the Service to employ a web-based graphical user interface.

The Laboratory's web site was redesigned to be more user friendly, and a web-based lab intranet was established.

The Laboratory added an Asian medicinal database to the web site which allows users to look up a variety of Asian medicines by name or possible ingredients. The database also contains photographs of the packaging for each medicine.

Work by Laboratory scientists resulted in resulted in the publication of six peer-reviewed articles:

1. "Additional Observations on Davis Derringer Breech Face Markings." M.J. Mann. *Association of Firearm and Toolmark Examiners Journal*, v. 29, n. 3, 1997.

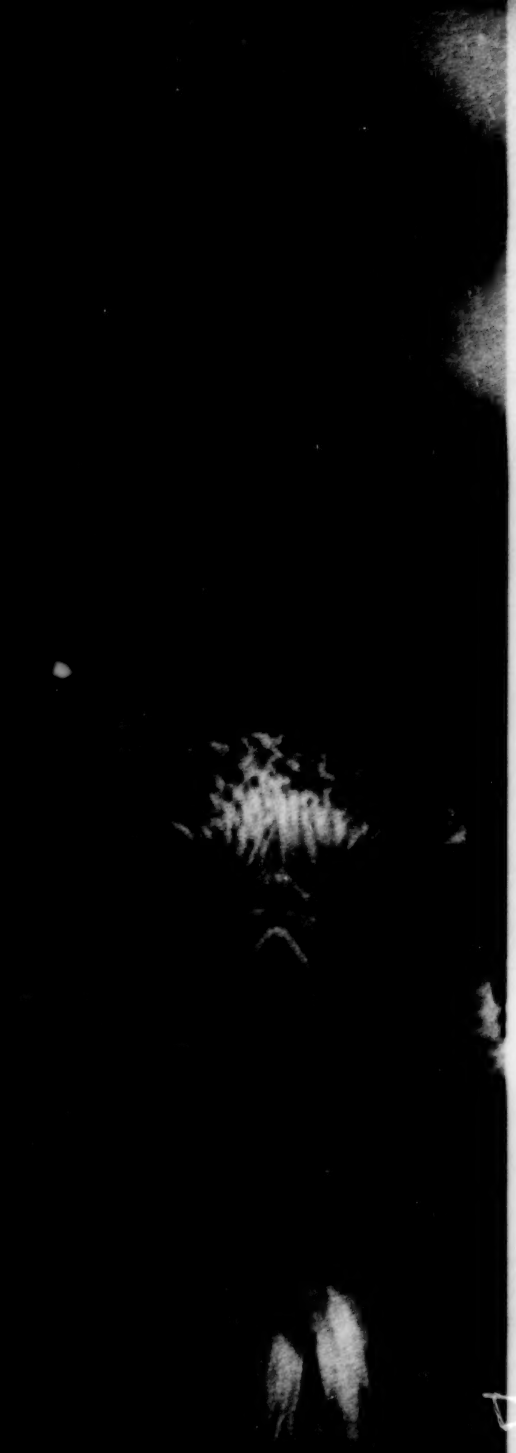
2. "Forensic Investigational Techniques for Wildlife Law Enforcement Investigations." R.K. Stroud and W.J. Adrian. In *Noninfectious Diseases of Wildlife*, 2nd edition. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1996.

3. "Molecular genetic identification of a Mexican onza specimen as puma (*Puma concolor*)." P.A. Dratch and W. Roslund. *Cryptozoology*, v. 12, 1997.

4. "Physical Characteristics of Selected Polymer Tipped Rifle Bulleta." M.J. Mann and A.D. Reinholz. *Association of Firearm and Toolmark Examiners Journal*, v. 29, n. 2, 1997.

5. "Taphonomic Indicators Used to Infer Wasteful Subsistence Hunting in Northwest Alaska." E.O. Espinoza, B.C. Yates, M.J. Mann, A.R. Crane, K.W. Goddard, J.P. LeMay, R.K. Speckman, and M.A. Webb. (Proceedings of the 7th International Conference for Archaeozoology, ICAZ, Constance, Sept. 1994.) *Anthropozoologie*, n. 25-26, 1997.

6. "Winter poisoning of coyotes and raptors with Furadan-laced carcass baits." G.T. Allen, J.K. Veatch, R.K. Stroud, C.G. Vendel, R.H. Poppenga, L. Thompson, J.A.Shafer, and W.E. Braselton. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*, v. 32, n. 2, 1996.



Historical Background

Before 1970, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not have a formal training program for law enforcement officers. Over the years, a small number of Service agents attended the basic Treasury Department Law Enforcement School, which all Department of Treasury agents were required to attend. In 1970, the Service and several other government agencies entered into a Memorandum of Understanding for the sponsorship and operation of a consolidated Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC). Initially located in Washington, D.C., the Center moved in 1975 to a 1,500-acre complex near Brunswick, Georgia, on the site of a former Naval Air Station.

In March 1972, U.S. game management agents began attending a National Criminal Investigator School conducted by the Department of the Treasury as an integral part of their training. In that same year, the Service enhanced the national training concept by introducing an introductory, agency-specific training program for new special agents that covered the basics of Federal wildlife law enforcement (a course now known as Special Agent Basic School). In 1977, the Division of Law Enforcement began using FLETC training facilities in Glynco, Georgia. Today, the Division's Branch of Training and Inspection, located at FLETC and Arlington, Virginia, is responsible for basic training of all Service law enforcement personnel as well as advanced training for those within the Division of Law Enforcement.

Training for wildlife inspectors began in the late 1970s; instruction consisted primarily of on-the-job training augmented with seminars. Since 1984, the Service has conducted a formal basic training program at FLETC for all newly hired wildlife inspectors.

In addition to the basic training programs, the Branch conducts annual "in-service" training for special agents and wildlife inspectors. Such training has been provided for agents since 1976; a similar program for inspectors began in 1986. In-service programs are designed to refresh basic law enforcement skills and update officers regarding changes in laws, regulations, and policies.

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center

The facilities at FLETC range from a high-speed pursuit driving track to entire houses redesigned to provide settings for realistic demonstrations and practical exercises for more than 20,000 trainees a year. Computerized shooting ranges, physical fitness facilities, and computer laboratory facilities are used to teach Federal law enforcement and investigative skills to officers from more than 72 Federal agencies.

New special agents are required to complete an intensive eight weeks of training in the Criminal Investigator School followed by an additional nine weeks of agency-specific training called Special Agent Basic School. Upon satisfactory completion of these two courses, they are assigned to special agent positions and receive on-the-job training for a period of 12 to 18 months.

Wildlife inspectors attend a four-week basic training course during their first year of employment. Conducted by the Service, the program focuses on wildlife import-export responsibilities and is designed to familiarize inspectors with Service policies and procedures as implemented at designated ports and border areas.

Refuge officers attend an 11-week training course at the Center followed by a two-week agency-specific program called Refuge Officer Basic School. This program focuses on the laws, policies, and enforcement problems unique to national wildlife refuges.

Firearms proficiency is an important requirement for Service special agents. USFWS

The Branch conducts the required annual in-service training programs for special agents and wildlife inspectors at various locations throughout the country. Locations have included FLETC, Evergreen Air Pinal Park, Marana, Arizona, the Service's National Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon, and the Service's new National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

FY 1997 Accomplishments

During FY 1997, the Branch of Training and Inspection administered the various law enforcement training programs as required for all Service law enforcement personnel.

In March 1997, nine new special agent trainees graduated from Special Agent Basic School and were assigned to their first duty stations to begin on-the-job training. Later that month, two 40-hour annual in-service training sessions were conducted in Marana, Arizona, for all Service special agents.

In May 1997, 14 new wildlife inspectors successfully completed the requisite four-week Wildlife Inspector Basic School conducted at FLETC in Glynco, Georgia. In October and November, two one-week in-service training sessions for wildlife inspectors were held in Marana, Arizona.

In support of the Division's outreach program, the Branch of Training and Inspection hosted a criminal justice intern from the University of Alabama during the last two weeks of May. The intern assisted the training office in its daily operations and observed various classes in the Land Management and Criminal Investigators Training programs at FLETC.

In September, the Branch hosted a meeting of Department of the Interior training representatives at FLETC.

During the fiscal year, 34 refuge officers graduated from the 11-week Land Management Police Training program at FLETC. In August, 23 refuge officers attended the two-week Refuge Officer Basic School conducted by the Branch.

Annual inspections were conducted by the Branch of Training and Inspection during May and June in Regions Two and One. Field inspections were conducted at Mesa, Arizona; Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Bellingham, Blaine, and Vancouver, Washington; San Francisco and Sacramento, California; and Honolulu, Hawaii. Regional Offices in Albuquerque, New Mexico (Region Two) and Portland, Oregon (Region One) were also inspected.

In February, a "Law Enforcement for Managers" training program was conducted by the Branch at FLETC. The class was designed for Service managers who have overall responsibility for administration of law enforcement activities in their regions and on national wildlife refuges. The class exposed the managers to such issues as authority and jurisdiction, and civil liability, and provided an overview of Service law enforcement policies and training as well as law enforcement personnel and programs within the Divisions of Law Enforcement and Refuges.

During the fiscal year, Branch personnel instructed 870 U.S. Customs Service inspectors attending U.S. Customs Inspector Basic Training. The training provided an introduction to Service laws and regulations governing the import and export of wildlife and wildlife products.

END

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